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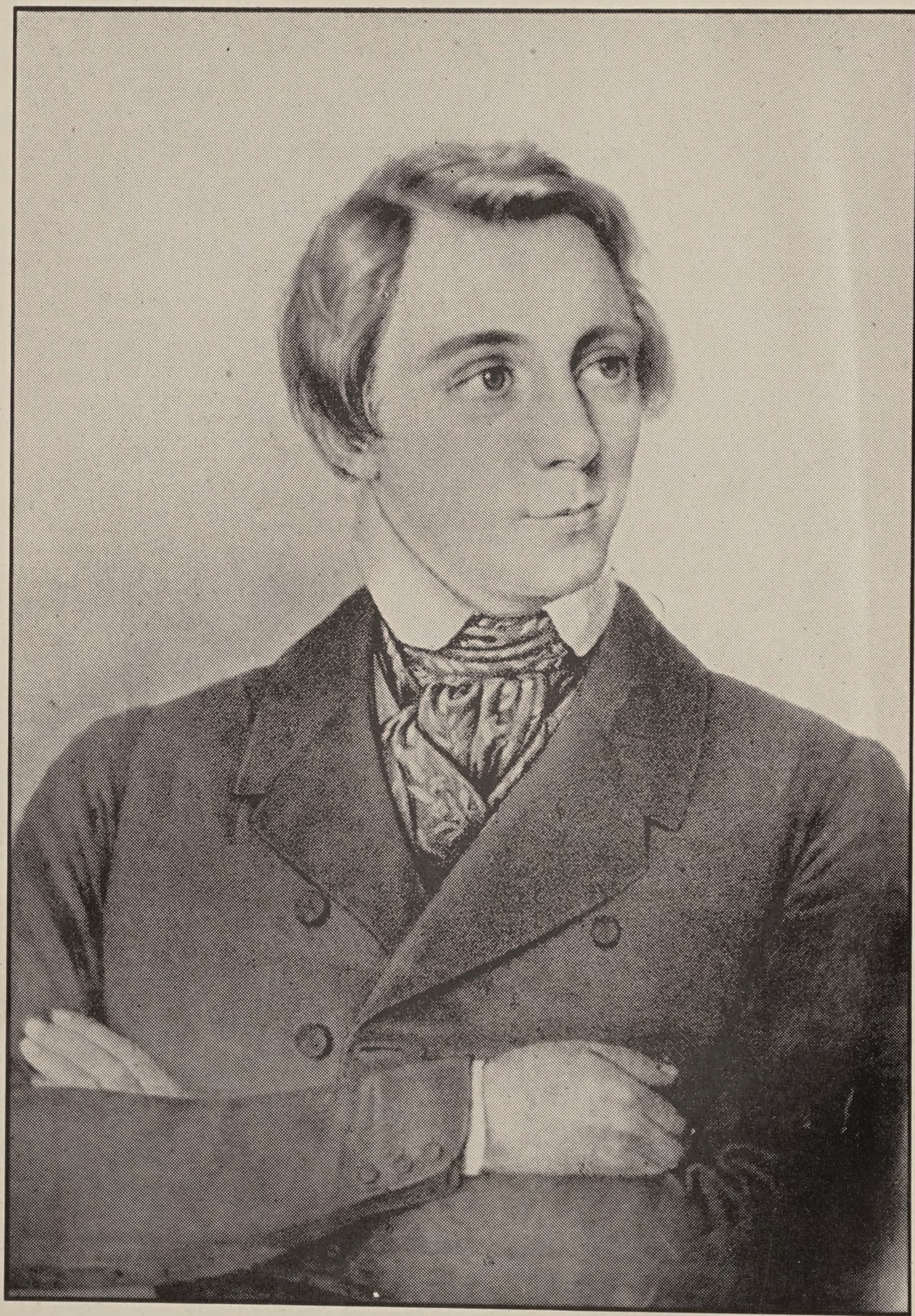


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OLEA

A STORY OF THE NORSEMEN IN PENNSYLVANIA



Alfred Bull

OLEA

A STORY OF THE NORSEMEN IN PENN-
SYLVANIA

BY

SAMUEL HAVEN GLASSMIRE



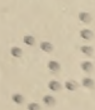
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To

MY GERMAN-NORWEGIAN FRIENDS

IN THE FOOTHILLS OF THE ALLEGHENIES,
THIS TALE OF THEIR INTERESTING COUNTRY IS,
WITH MANY HAPPY MEMORIES,
RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED
BY THE AUTHOR

FOREWORD

It is not presumed that this little narrative, half history and half fiction, will rise to the dignity of historical romance.

Yet if such it might be called, it would be well to say, in advance, that the theme of the story is taken from the ill-fated attempt at Norwegian colonization in Pennsylvania, made by the famous musician-patriot, Ole Bull, in the year 1852.

Historically, the main facts in connection with the coming of the Norsemen to Potter County, as related herein, are substantially correct ; the sketches of the quaint Norwegian and German settlements, and the relatively accurate setting of the chief incidents described, will be easily recognized by those familiar with the topography and historical associations of this particular region.

The life of Ole Bull is too well known to need further comment here, and I gratefully acknowledge my indebtedness to Mrs. Sara G. Bull's *Memoir*, from which I have taken numerous facts concerning the life of the great artist. His doubtful actual residence at his forest castle in Pennsylvania is here made the subject of fiction.

The love story of Karl and Olea, the relations existing between the Germans and Norwegians, and the myth of the "Wild Boy," are all purely fictitious; and an apology is due to those good friends of mine,

to whom I dedicate the story, for the liberty taken in attempting to weave a little romance into the familiar history of a country they and I so well know and so highly esteem.

S. H. G.

March, 1913.

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OLEA

A Story of the Norsemen in Pennsylvania

CHAPTER I

THE WATERSHED IN POTTER COUNTY

THE mountain regions of northern Pennsylvania have a romantic history which is at once graphic and interesting.

Many old legends of the northern tier are full of the rare charm which is associated only with the silent grandeur of forest and stream at the headwaters of the Allegheny, the Genesee, and Susquehanna.

It is in this particular country, in the County of Potter, that some low ranges of the Alleghenies and a few scattered hills, abruptly coming together, seem to almost meet in a comparatively small area; and the tableland, gradually sloping in three general directions, thus makes of this one county a natural watershed for a vast expanse of terri-

tory—giving it the unique distinction of being the only county on the continent which contains within its borders, and, in places, within a mile or two of each other, distinct tributaries of three immense Atlantic basins.

In the most northern of these foothills the beautiful Genesee River finds its source, and, flowing northward across the Empire State, reaches the Great Lakes, and finally mingles its waters with the mighty St. Lawrence, in its eastward flow to the ocean.

At a tiny spring in the same plateau the majestic Allegheny River heads, and, winding southward and northward and southward again, increased by mountain rivulets as it goes, crosses the Keystone State to join the Monongahela from the south, forming the great Ohio; which, in turn, unites with the muddy volume of the Mississippi in its onward course to the Gulf of Mexico.

In the southeastern corner of the county, a section of the old Jersey Shore Turnpike (built in the year 1848), which follows the narrow dividing ridge or "hog's back" between Cherry Springs and New Bergen, roughly marks the headwaters of three separate tributaries of the Susquehanna, that grand and picturesque river of Pennsylvania.

North of the Turnpike, a mile or two from the clearing where the old "halfway house" or Cherry Springs tavern once stood, and far down in the forest valley, the West Branch of Pine Creek finds its subterranean sources in the unexplored ravines

The Watershed in Potter County 3

of the Sunken Branch; and the main channel of Pine Creek burrows deep through and between towering ranges of the Alleghenies before it joins the Susquehanna down near Jersey Shore.

South of the old "Pike," and only a few miles from the "Springs," the East Fork of the Sinnamahoning is formed by the mountain brooks from each side of the valley; farther south, at the forks of the road, the famous little Wild Boy comes tumbling out of the dark recesses of the forest to join it on the right; and this East Fork, uniting with the First Fork and the South Branch (one who intimately knows the length of this little stream, from far above where it unites with Moore's Run, cannot forget the singular charm of the lovely, lonely South Branch), contributes to the beautiful Sinnamahoning Creek, which, in turn, is joined by Cross Fork, the Kettle Creeks, and grand old Pine Creek—Potter County waters all—swelling the great West Branch of the Susquehanna, as it pierces and twists through the Alleghenies and floods far out across Pennsylvania, until, at last, its pure mountain waters are mingled with the Atlantic at the bay of Chesapeake.

The third important tributary of the Sinnamahoning and Susquehanna, in southeastern Potter, flowing through a country full of historic associations and interest, is known at its headwaters by the name of Little Kettle Creek.

From somewhere below and back of the turnpike, and following the sloping ravines of the

dividing ridge, small mountain rivulets unite to form this little stream, winding through the now almost deserted village of New Bergen and on past the abandoned settlement at Oleona, in the valley just below, where it joins the main branch; and Kettle Creek flows on down the historic valley, past the site of New Norway and the old stone house at Walhalla, — called Valhalla, the “last valley” or “heaven,” in the Norse mythology of Odin and Thor.

These names are all famous in local history as the homes of those unfortunate Norwegian colonists, who, years ago, came and named them in honor of their “old” Bergen and Norway, and to commemorate their founding by their intrepid leader—the world-famous musician-patriot, Ole Bull.

Opposite Walhalla, where Ole Bull Run empties into Kettle Creek, and high up on the mountain-side, on the crest of a precipitous bluff overlooking the quaint settlements nestled in the picturesque valley below, Ole Bull built his famous castle, the crumbling walls of which can still be seen from the distant highway, standing out like a silent sentinel—witnessing to the failure and tragedy of its past.

CHAPTER II

THE RUINS OF THE CASTLE

THESE mountain regions of Potter County were once covered with dense forests of hemlock and pine. Over these timbered hills and barren windfalls the native black bear and the graceful red deer roamed at will, undisturbed in all their mad abandon to the law of the jungles—true monarchs of the forest primeval!

And it is nature's own wilderness to-day. The wild lands, stripped of their heavy first-growth timber, are now being covered with the second-growth hardwoods, with which nature seeks to replenish her denuded domains—somewhat after the fashion of an economical dame. And the deer and bear still find a home in the slashings and on the barrens, which are now becoming wooded and majestic again in a new verdure of maple and beech.

The mountain brooks once also abounded with speckled trout, to the delight of the native fisherman, and many are the stories of woodland and stream which are still told 'round the camp-fires beside Sinnamahoning waters. These streams

have lost nothing of their crystal clearness or pristine beauty, despite the ravages of the woodman's axe along their shady banks, and the speckled brook trout thrive there still.

Though much of the first wild enchantment may be lost and gone from the woods, the zeal of the sportsman and the joy of the nature-lover are not less keen there to-day than of old.

It was late in the leafy month of June, when trout fishing is at its best, and when the forest beauty of Potter County is seen in all its gorgeous freshness, when we last camped on Little Kettle Creek.

Sebastian and I, dressed in high hip boots, corduroy trousers, fisherman's jackets and slouch hats, left camp early one morning, intending to put in a good day on the stream, and, towards evening, to visit the ruins of the famous Ole Bull castle.

Sebastian knew this country and its history well, for he was, indeed, a descendant of one of the few remaining Norwegian families of the ill-fated colony at Walhalla, and three generations of his family had lived in the old "stone house" on the banks of Kettle Creek.

It was glorious sport that day! The trout were jumping well for the first time in several days; as we changed our flies, we found them taking the "Great Dun" and the "General Hooker" (Sebastian's favorite flies), and not long after midday we had our reed baskets nearly full of beautiful

speckled trout, and were somewhat tired and hungry after our jaunt over the slippery rocks and driftwood along the stream.

We sat down on the shady bank and took our fly rods apart, and dressed our catch, putting some fresh grass and leaves on the top of our baskets (and, be it confessed, a little bunch at the bottom also—after the manner of a true and tried fisherman in these parts). Then we ate our lunch and smoked our pipes and rested beside the rippling waters, listening to the shrill notes of the blackbird as his bright wings flashed above the grasses,—dozing in the heavy summer air, fragrant with the perfume of the pink azalea, until, at length, the sun began to sink toward the western mountains.

Knowing my desire to see the castle before dark, Sebastian soon arose and led the way up the hemlock ridge which rose abruptly on our right. After a toilsome climb up the steep mountain side, which was covered with large rocks and fallen trunks of trees, we reached the huge mountain spur, projecting out and overlooking the valley, and stood, at last, very much exhausted, before the crumbling ruins of the old castle.

Alarmed at our sudden approach, a fluffy partridge, strutting on a log near-by, darted, with a rumbling, trumpet sound, quickly down the mountain side. A noisy chipmunk, perched upon the moss-covered wall of the castle, with a piercing “chir-r-r-p”, as if to warn us that his domain

was being intruded upon, scampered down the broken stairway and disappeared through the rotten floor. Far above us in the heavens, poised lazily 'gainst the evening sky, a keen-eyed hawk circled dreamily around the cliff, and, with a gentle flap of his wings, floated, in a widening circle, far down the valley and vanished as a speck in the distance.

A profound silence, so peculiar to a summer twilight in the mountains, fell 'round the deserted castle, and hung over the mountain cliffs, and spread across the narrow valley which wound so peacefully at their feet. Not an echo nor a rustle of the gentle wind among the trees broke the enchanting solitude of the place. The sun, dropping behind the twin peaks towering above us, threw miniature somber side-lights between the giant hemlocks, and the lengthening fantastic shadows cast a weird halo over the panorama below.

How fascinating is the spell which nature, sometimes, in a burst of simple grandeur, and in a subtle and mysterious way, throws over and around the scenes of past achievement, as in a gentle benediction!

Climbing lightly up the moss-covered battlement, the projecting stones of which, from the action of the rains and storms, had formed irregular steps, we reached the top of the crumbling wall of the castle.

Our position commanded a view far up and

down the picturesque valley of the Kettle Creek. Quaint curved-roofed log houses with their outside stone chimneys, deserted and dilapidated, could be seen here and there in the distance; the old Oleona hotel, then owned by the Olsons, but which was formerly the "Lion Tent" where Ole Bull gave his first reception in '52, stood at the "corners"; the village general store, for so many years conducted by that courtly old prince of Norse hospitality, Henrik Andresen (who came in '52 as Ole Bull's private secretary), and which was long afterwards run by his estimable wife, Mary, stood there at the turn of the road just below; the abandoned little buildings where sixteen families once lived at New Norway, with the schoolhouse and church, and Sebastian's old "stone house" at Walhalla directly across the stream, which had since been rebuilt from the stone and lumber procured from the dismantled castle—all these landmarks of Norwegian colonization rose indistinctly into view as we traced the crooked wagon-road and the course of the rapid stream, winding in and out along the narrow valley between the hemlock hills.

Ole Bull's fortress-like castle was conceived, no doubt, to resemble the famous promontory known in Norway as "Ole Bull's Lookout"—at Lysekloster on the fjord of the Norland.

That old estate was a curious relic of the eleventh century, whose medieval turrets were afterwards embellished with the crest of the Bull family

("Bellum vita, vita Bellum"), and was located near his boyhood's home on the Island of Osteroen. This weirdly picturesque environment of his childhood undoubtedly became Ole Bull's inspiration in modeling his wilderness possessions in Pennsylvania after the stupendous proportions of the citadels on the calm, deep, blue fjords of the mystic land of his birth.

The conception of building an impregnable fortress overlooking his vast domains, at least well illustrated the essentially Viking quality in his romantic character.

In architecture the two-story framework of the building was not elaborate in design, but was of the light and fantastic order, of which so much is to be seen in the old country. The roof was a four-squared design, and wide porches surrounded the building. The interior was finished in carved natural wood, and the walls were adorned with beautiful tapestries and heavy inlaid papering fabric, with quaint and curious Norse designs.

These artistic decorations had now long since been removed, and the embellished woodwork hacked and carried away, leaving the immense stone wall, which marked the edge of the bluff, dismantled and tottering.

In that summer twilight, Sebastian and I, seated on the rough ledge which had once been surrounded by a rustic railing carved from the native wood, and with our backs against the moss-grown column of stone, fell into a dreamy contem-

plation of the fascinating scene before us,—our thoughts wandering back over the interesting history of this isolated place, and memories of the romantic stories which have gathered 'round these castle walls came back to us with all the solemn irony of the years.

It was then that Sebastian told me the tragic story of the coming of the Norsemen, and the legend of Olea, the beautiful daughter of the colony.

CHAPTER III

OLE BULL—THE MUSICIAN-PATRIOT

MAGNANIMOUS indeed had been the purposes and impulses of Ole Bornemann Bull in his scheme of Scandinavian colonization in Pennsylvania.

This man of genius was a patriotic son of Norway. Born of gentle parentage, in the year 1810, in the old mist-shrouded city of Bergen, surrounded by its seven hills, he had early experienced something of the political oppression which at that time, and even during the reign of his martial sovereign King Karl Johan of Sweden, held in subjection the rising Teutonic spirit of liberty in the United Kingdom.

The treaty of Kiel in 1814 had, at last, dissolved the union with Denmark, which had existed for over four centuries, during which time Norway had been shrouded in intellectual darkness. The adoption of the Norwegian constitution on the memorable 17th of May, 1814, marked the practical independence of the nation, and the later political union with Sweden, effected under Bernadotte, has never since materially impeded



Ruins of Ole Bull's Castle Wall

the growth of a national spirit, nor the patriotism of the Norsemen.

In fact these propitious events but heralded in a revival of learning and a new nationalism, the sentiment of the age giving birth to Norway's greatest poets and artists. The political Eddas and Sagas of the golden epoch, from the eleventh to the fourteenth centuries, became the literary and artistic inspiration of this dawning era, since the old ballads, popular melodies, folk-lore and legends had been carefully preserved and treasured by the common people.

In his youth Ole Bull had met with many discouragements and hardships, while his undaunted ambition was ever urging him onward to the perfection of his art. Like Mozart, he was never taught to read music, but he early imbibed the rules of his art unknowingly. When King Frederick VI of Denmark once asked him who had taught him to play, he answered, "The mountains of Norway, your Majesty." From infancy he always fancied he heard nature chant the wild and melancholy cadences which inspired his weird and original melodies.

Being a true interpreter of nature, the quality of his artistic productions was greatly influenced by the environment in which he lived. Trees, rocks, stream and mountain, all spoke a language which found expression through the strings of his instrument. He faithfully imitated the voice of nature as she spoke to him in the wind in the trees,

in the rustle of the leaves, the call of the birds, and the roar of the waterfalls. This rare ability was the distinctive mark of Ole Bull's great musical genius.

Henrik Arnold Wergeland, the Norwegian poet who first gave poetical expression to the glowing patriotic enthusiasm for Norse liberty and independence—and was to Norway, in the world of letters, what Ole Bull was in the world of music—said of him: “The greatest marvel of all was that he brought Norway home to the Norsemen. Most people knew the folk-songs and dances, but were ashamed to admire them. Lifted by him into their confidence and love, these homely melodies suddenly began to gleam like stars, and the people came to feel that they too had jewels of their own.”

But it was Longfellow who immortalized the genius of the great musician, in his *Tales of the Wayside Inn*:

Last the Musician, as he stood
Illumined by that fire of wood;
Fair-haired, blue-eyed, his aspect blithe,
His figure tall and straight and lithe,
And every feature of his face
Revealing his Norwegian race;
A radiance, streaming from within,
Around his eyes and forehead beamed;
The angel with the violin,
Painted by Raphael, he seemed.

.

And when he played, the atmosphere
Was filled with magic, and the ear
Caught echoes of that Harp of Gold,
Whose music had so weird a sound,
The hunted stag forgot to bound,
The leaping rivulet backward rolled,
The birds came down from bush and tree,
The dead came from beneath the sea,
The maiden to the harper's knee!

.

At the early age of twenty-one Ole Bull found his way to Paris, the Mecca of all great artists. There he soon found himself reduced to poverty and sought assistance from his friends,—the master-musician, Chopin, assisting him in procuring a violin; but soon, however, he began to win local distinction as a student of the great Paganini, whom he met later, in 1837.

His fame spread rapidly with the successes of his concerts in Switzerland and at Milan, at Venice, Naples, and London. At Rome, because of his marvelous performances in playing four distinct parts on the violin at once (Ole Bull is said to have been the only musician in the world who ever produced the marvelous effect of four violins in unison), the people, and even royalty, hailed him as a magician. Everywhere he went on the continent he was received with unbounded enthusiasm.

He first found confidence in his own powers at

Florence, in 1834, and from Bologna his friends at home first received news of his triumphs; he returned to his native Bergen in 1838, where he was joyfully welcomed.

This "Amphion of the North," as Hans Christian Anderson dubbed him, found his highest inspiration and his heart's religion in the themes of the immortal Mozart, and could find no loftier expression of human thought than the theme of the master's *Requiem*.

Though Ole Bull played at the coronation of kings, as he did for William of Germany, and was honored with Liszt in London, where together they rendered Beethoven's matchless *Kreutzer Sonata*, his loyal and sympathetic heart was never weaned, by public adulation, from his native land. He was a zealous patriot, and never forgot his dear "Gamle Norge," and even long after he became famous he always delighted to call himself, "Ole Olson Viol, Norse Norman from Norway."

+ Ole Bull first visited America in 1842 and made a triumphant tour of the United States, Canada, and the West Indies, traveling more than one hundred thousand miles, and giving over two hundred concerts.

So great was his popularity in America that on this trip alone Ole Bull saved eighty thousand dollars, and it is known that in addition to this he gave over twenty thousand dollars from the proceeds of his concerts to various charitable institutions, besides paying about fifteen thousand

dollars to artists and musicians who assisted him.

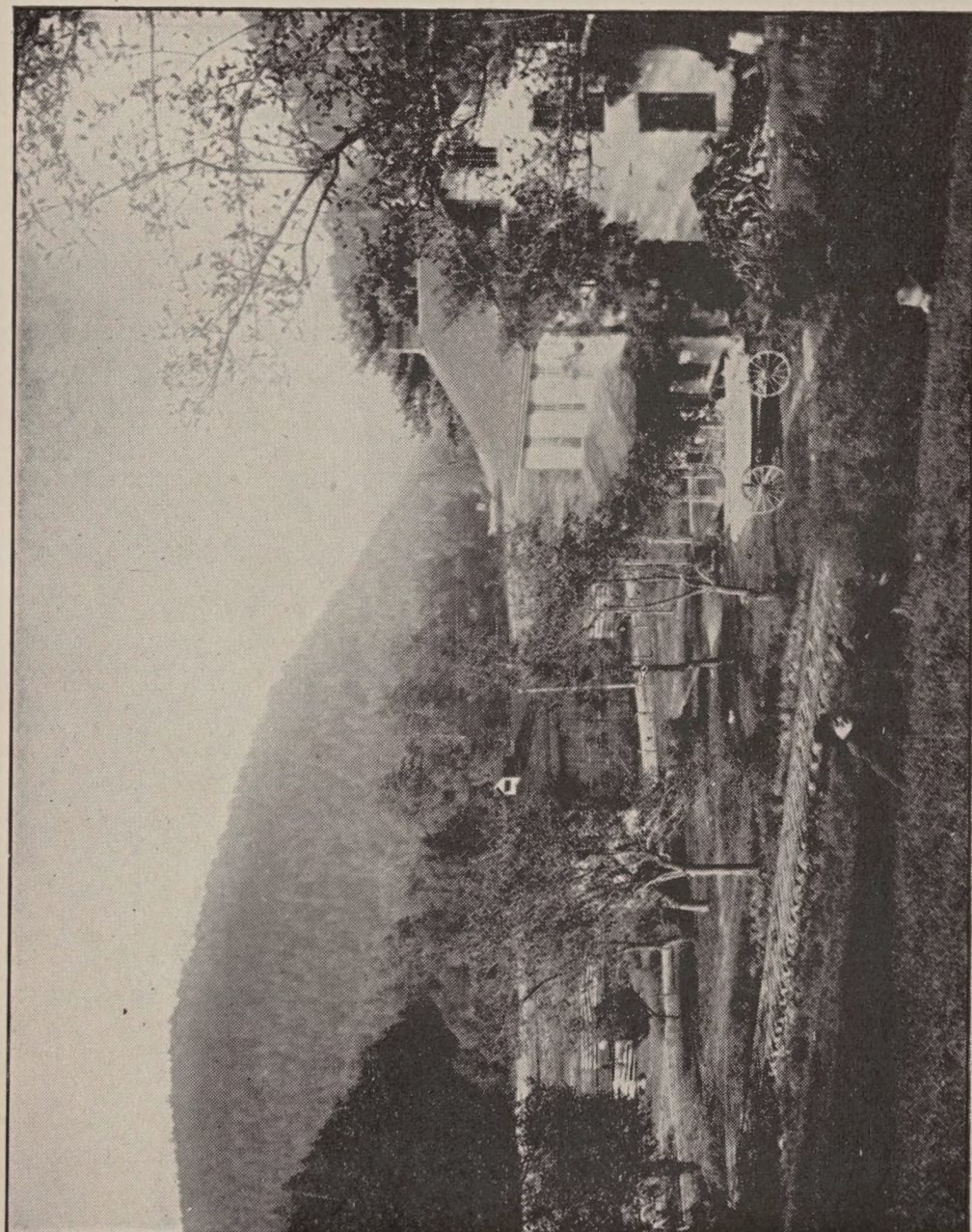
After another successful European tour, Ole Bull returned to the United States in 1852 with the intention of consummating the dream of his life,—the founding of a colony for his fellow-countrymen in the land where he had been so graciously received, where they would be free from all oppression and political tyranny.

With the proceeds of his concert earnings, he negotiated for the purchase of an immense tract of land, consisting in all of about 125,000 acres, lying along the Susquehanna waters in northern Pennsylvania; from a landowner in Philadelphia, he purchased, for ten thousand dollars, 11,144 acres at the headwaters of Kettle Creek, being warrants of land in Abbott and Stewardson townships, Potter County. Inspired by high ideals and lovely humanitarian sentiments, he made elaborate plans for the settlement and development of his colony; eventually, it is supposed, he expended the greater part of his fortune on this land and in building homes for his people.

He organized his first band of about eight hundred Norwegians, who, in the summer of 1852, set sail from their beloved country, and came, with swelling hearts and high expectations to plant a "New Bergen" in Pennsylvania.

True to his patriotic impulses, Ole Bull an-

nounced to his countrymen that, "we are to found a New Norway, consecrated to liberty, baptized with independence, and protected by the Union's mighty flag."



Old Stone House at Walhalla

CHAPTER IV

THE COMING OF THE NORSEMEN

THE first company of emigrants came to their new possessions by the old Jersey Shore Turnpike—a motley crowd of queerly dressed, hardy, but inexperienced Norwegians.

They had reached Coudersport, the county-seat town, during the month of September, when the county court was in session; so great was the excitement caused by their novel appearance in the quiet town, that the court was obliged to adjourn, and the citizens all turned out to see the strange crowd of people and to greet the famous musician, who generously played for them in the old court-house.

Major Samuel M. Mills, a well-known citizen, far-famed as a jolly boniface and wit, was, at this time, proprietor of the hotel at the “four corners,” and it fell to the Major’s hospitable lot to feed the assembled guests, and also, at the request of Ole Bull, to act as guide for the Norwegians on their first journey to their wilderness home.

A little in advance of this remarkable band of foreigners, as they toiled along up the “Pike” to

their future home, a number of young and able-bodied men, each carrying a hatchet or axe, were clumsily cutting the trees and underbrush from the road to make room for the cumbersome wagons in the rear. Upon these wagons, drawn by large stage horses, was loaded the entire outfit of the settlers, which consisted of curious household effects and belongings brought from the old country, and some farming implements which, for the most part, were unadapted for use in this new and uncultivated country.

Seated, or perched as best they could, on these creaking wagons were the elderly women and matrons of the company, some with babes in their arms; while several men and some of the children, who were evidently tired of walking, were taking turns in riding on the heavy loads.

Behind these followed a dozen or more teams with big lumber-wagons loaded high with rough lumber, on top of which were piled the scanty provisions and effects purchased at the county-seat.

Walking beside the wagons were a lot of rough, peculiar-looking men, wearing fur caps, home-spun jackets, and heavy square-toed boots, and with red handkerchiefs around their necks, all jabbering loudly among themselves, and pointing at every unfamiliar object to be seen along the road.

In the rear of the queer procession came a party of robust young women, dressed in scarlet jackets and white blouses; and behind them, a crowd of

boys and children, picking their way along the wagon-road, talking and laughing together as if they quite enjoyed the novelty of their new life.

They each carried something in their arms; the men, some bags and boxes thrown lightly over their shoulders; the girls, some private treasures or possessions which they dared not entrust to the jolting wagons; and the children followed, tugging their dinner baskets filled with cracknells, crisp "flatbrod," and dried meat.

It was in this primitive way that the Norwegian pioneers came to find a home in the forests of Potter County.

Major Mills often delighted in telling, at his own expense, of an amusing incident of this trip to Oleona, which occurred at Cherry Springs where the company had halted for dinner. As everyone knew, the genial Major was endowed with an unusually strong voice, and in ordinary conversation he was wont to talk about as loudly as he naturally laughed. But some wag had told the Major that Ole Bull was very deaf, and, by a logic peculiar only to himself, the Major had imagined that because the poor Norwegians could not understand him when he thundered at them, they must necessarily be deaf also. At dinner, when Major Sam was violently gesticulating and bellowing in the ears of Ole Bull and at his amazed compatriots, endeavoring, no doubt, to make himself communicative and agreeable, Ole Bull, in his terse, broken English, exclaimed: "For God's

sake, man, stop dis yelling in mine ears. You make tem deaf already, I tink!" The Major eyed the musician quizzically, and with one of his roaring laughs, shouted: "Yelling? I thought your whole Dutch colony was already yet deaf as a post!"

At Oleona the first tree was cut by a woman, Mrs. John Hopper, who, with her husband, had accompanied the party from New York. A flag-staff was erected on which she ran up the banner of Norway together with the Danish flag (in compliment to the number of Danes who had joined the emigrants), and both entwined with the stars and stripes.

In the evening numerous bonfires illumined the landscape, and the founder, in whose honor the place was named, addressed his countrymen.

Then, in the starlight, this "Paganini of the North," standing tall and erect, with large blue eyes aflame and flaxen hair waving, seized his old violin and drew the wizard bow with a Teutonic reverence, mingled with impassioned inspiration, in a weird reproduction of the *Hulder*—the Spirit of the North—playing music as fascinating as the poetry of the Sagas and as mysterious as the light which lingers on his native mountains and fjords.

In a fantastic whirl of melody, his rich, wild minstrelsy scintillated like the mimic northern lights shooting upward to the sky, and then murmured deep incantations, till the harmony blended in the voice of the hemlock forest, chanting

uncanny monotonous,—then surging mightily like the *de profundis* of the sea.

It was at the “Lion Tent,” erected on this spot, that the patriotic people celebrated their first 17th of May and 4th of July in 1853. On the latter occasion, however, Ole Bull was sick in New York, whence he had gone to raise money and to meet a ship-load of recruits for the colony.

This was a sore disappointment to him, as he had expected to bring a number of his friends and musicians to take part in the celebration, which, nevertheless, was held, with a banquet at the “Lion Tent,” after which the celebrated “Halling Dance” was given by the young people, at the unfinished castle, and the national hymn and anthems were sung by the hundreds of Norsemen assembled.

Many and varied were the hardships and privations which the colonists encountered and overcame during the first few months of their American life; but their true Norse courage never failed them, as, with inborn pluck and perseverance, they hewed and cut and built and planted, until, before the end of the first year quite permanent and prosperous little villages began to assume quaint form at New Bergen and Oleona, and at New Norway and Walhalla.

During this trying yet happy time the genial and courageous Ole Bull was the commanding genius and faithful leader of his people. To him his countrymen looked for advice and support;

and they did not appeal to him in vain, as the many stories of his good will and generosity, and the reverence with which his name is still held among them, will amply testify.

On many a night, after their day's work was over, the people, young and old, would gather at the castle overlooking their little communities to partake of his kind hospitality. The older people came perhaps for advice or assistance, or to recall together the adventures of their former life in old Norway; the young folks congregated there and recited the familiar folk-tales and runes of the Nordland, and danced the graceful old-country round dances, and sang the "niebel-lungenlied" of their native land.

And then, greatest enjoyment of all to them, Ole Bull would play for them,—running over and over again the beautiful melodies, the soft strains from his old "Guarnerius" floating out and down the quiet valley as the wondrous measures vibrated through the hemlock wood.

This was Ole Bull as he was to them,—playing, always playing—his countrymen intently listening, as—

"Before the blazing fire of wood
Erect the rapt Musician stood;
And ever and anon he bent
His head upon his instrument;
And seemed to listen till he caught
Confessions from its secret thought,—
The joy, the triumph, the lament,

The Coming of the Norsemen 25

The exultation and the pain;
Then, by the magic of his art
He soothed the throbbings of its heart
And lulled it into peace again."

CHAPTER V

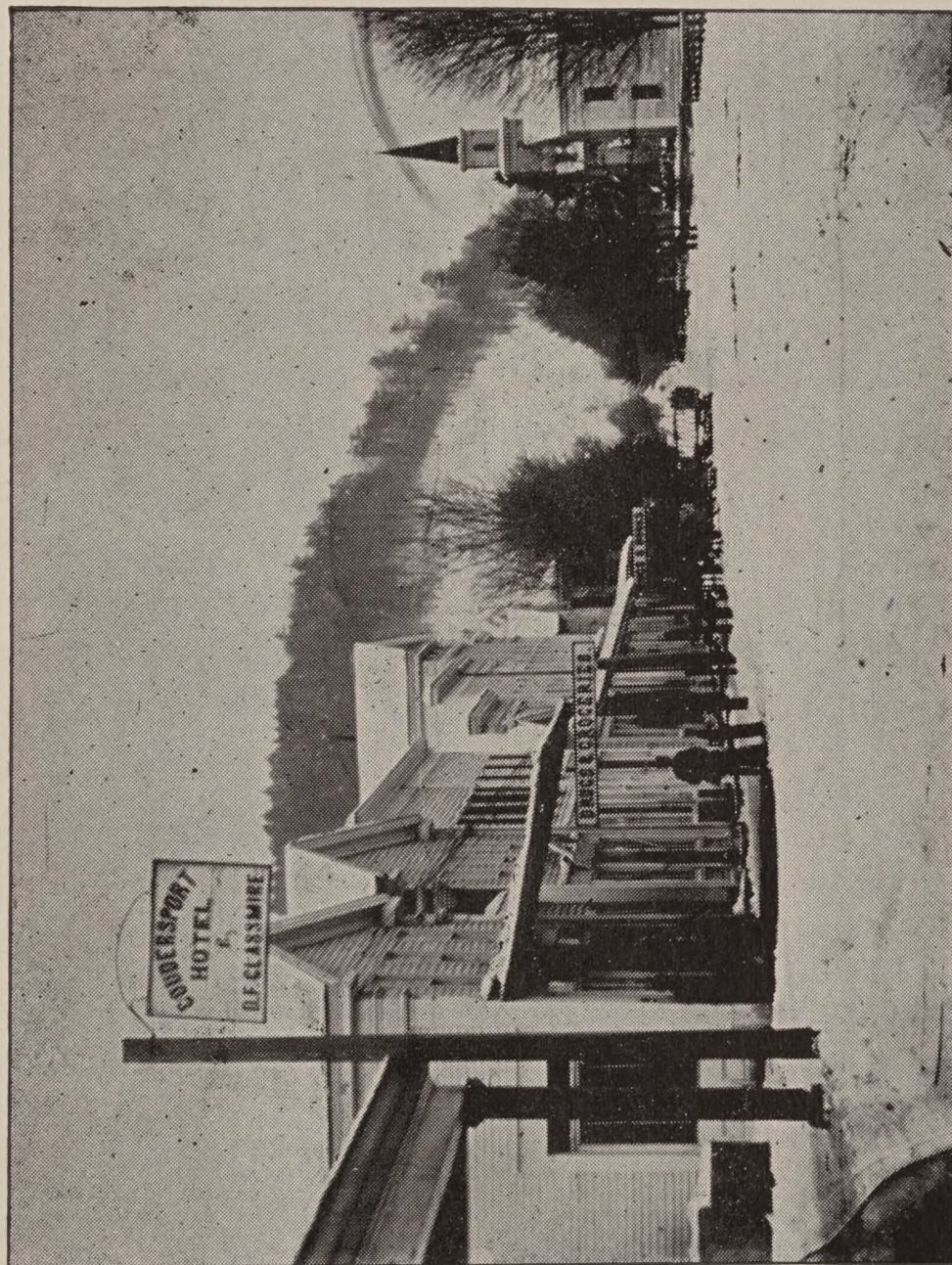
OLEA

AT these happy reunions there was one among the company whose presence added much to their mirthfulness and cheer, and whose sweet face and joyful disposition softened, more than all else perhaps, the often dreary and monotonous life of the colonists. This was Olea, the beautiful "Daughter of the North," as she was familiarly called,—a young girl whose charming personality is forever enshrined in the legends of these hills.

Olea was the second child of Syken Knude Ericsson, a sturdy old Norseman and Bergen friend of Ole Bull's, who had come to America with his family when Olea was about sixteen years old.

Syken Knude was mighty and imposing, with a wild and passionate Berserk nature, much resembling, in appearance and stature, the renowned Norsk giant, Engebret Soot, whose colossal deeds of strength and daring are recorded in the annals of the legendary Northland.

Olea had inherited much of her father's haughtiness and strength of character, which well fitted



Old Coudersport Hotel

her for a life of considerable adventure and romance, such as hers had been from infancy.

From the fact of her father's influence in the colony, and his relationship with Ole Bull, Olea easily became the general favorite at New Bergen and Oleona where she grew to young womanhood. Besides, she was the most beautiful of all the pretty Norwegian maidens of the twin settlements.

Hers was that healthy, almost robust, yet delicate and fascinating beauty, which so often characterizes the women of northern Europe,—a Teutonic type, which is queenly because it is so normal and proud, and beautiful because it is so divinely fair.

Olea had developed a quaint charm of manner and a stateliness of demeanor which was all her own. She had a well-proportioned figure, not too tall, but a trifle rounded, and as supple and strong as the graceful doe which grazed upon her native hills. Her rosy complexion reflected her healthy constitution as only northern blood can show its pureness by its surface glow, for her fair skin was as soft and white as the velvet which clings to the down of the thistle, blooming alone on the bank of the stream.

The blue of her eyes was deep and clear and reflecting, like the brown eyes of a fawn which, when startled, timidly peers through the thicket and gallops away. Olea's light wavy hair was not quite golden, nor auburn, but flaxen, with ringlets which clung and curled 'round her temples,

and fell, when unloosed, in silken clusters over her shoulders and neck.

With a voice soft and entreating, full of the tender expression which her slight accent gave to a language Teutonic and guttural, yet classic and strong, Olea was not too assertive, but rather innocent and mild and inquiring; and her full, red lips had a pretty habit of pouting, just a trifle, when she talked or smiled.

She loved her people and was proud of her Norse ancestry and their traditions; although raised in an environment of uncultured privation, Olea was yet gentle and brave; she could shoot with all the alertness of a forest hunter, and could cast a fly upon the waters with just the precision and skill of an angler on her native streams.

Even slow-going, unemotional Helga Olson, whom Olea had known since childhood, used to look upon her with admiration and blank amazement when she would easily outrun him to meet the big broad-gauged stage-coach coming down the pike at dusk, or, when out fishing, she would catch more trout than he ever could at the splash-dam.

Helga was one of those dreamy young fellows who always achieve so little because of the much they conceive. He and Olea had been sweet-hearts from childhood; not because Helga had ever done anything in particular to endear himself to Olea, nor had she ever shown much more than a friendly interest in him, yet, from mere force of

circumstances, they had gradually grown to consider themselves as destined for each other.

Knude Ericsson had approved of him simply because their families had been friends in the old country for years, and Olea had never stopped to consider whether or not that fact would eventually count more with her than love or affection; so she had tolerated Helga, and even liked him, in a sisterly sort of way, for she had never known another boy-friend or companion; and love, to her, was as yet like a myth from the Sagas,—something mysterious and unknown.

But, with all his conceit and negative virtues, as compared with most of his young companions, Helga was prepossessing and bright and had an agreeable manner, though at times he was disposed to be jealous and sullen,—at least whenever Olea would chance to pay his comrades any particular attention or favor.

So it is evident that Olea and Helga were by nature and temperament quite far apart and unsuited for each other; while, to all outward appearances, the two were congenial and happy in the unaffected and simple parts they played in the social and civic life of New Bergen.

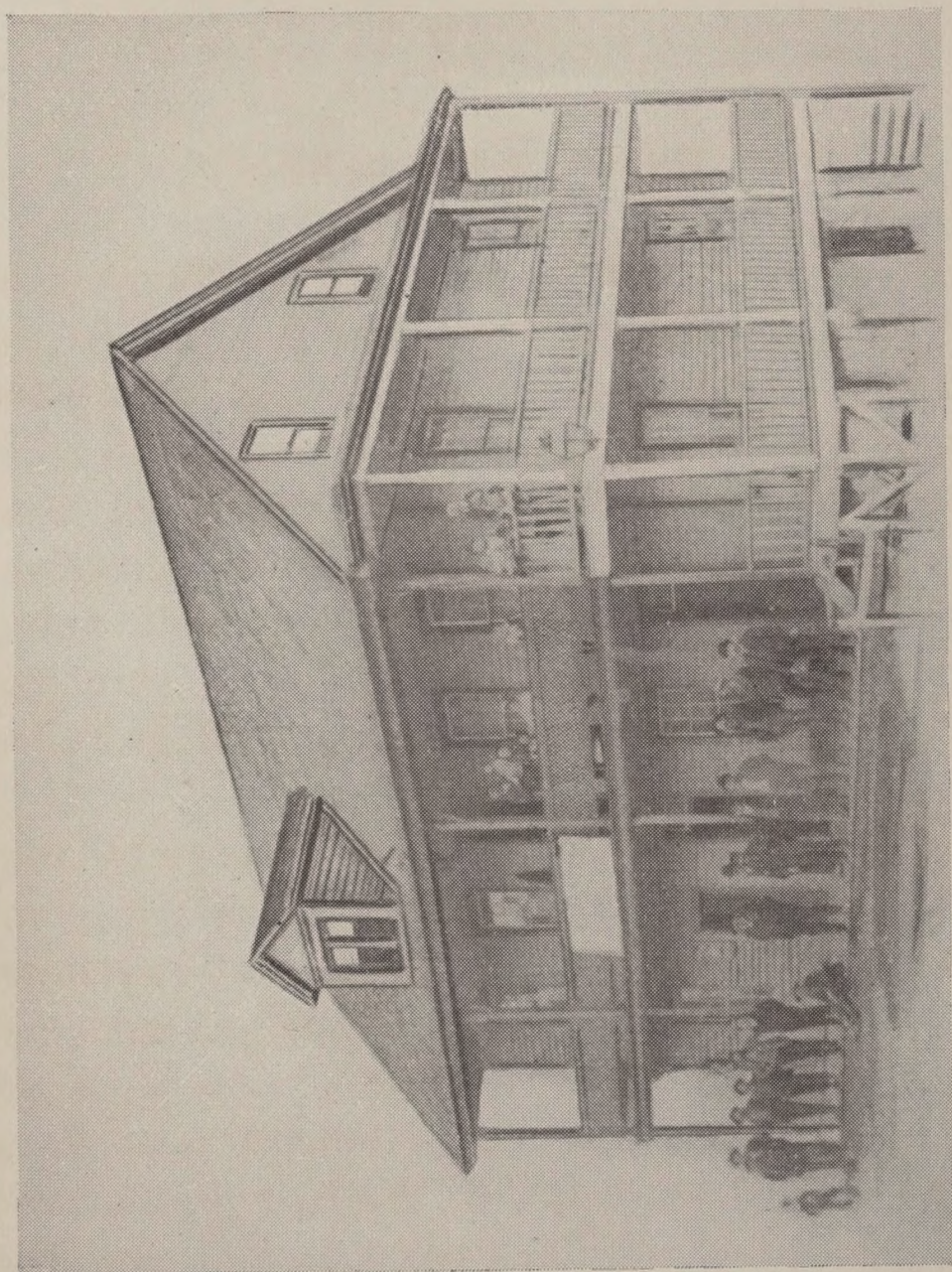
CHAPTER VI

THE COMING OF THE GERMANS

A FEW years after the arrival of the Norwegians in Pennsylvania, there was founded, in the year 1855, another colony, with whose history the story of the Norwegians is closely connected.

This was a settlement of industrious and prosperous Germans, who had established themselves in the beautiful valley just over the hill, about four miles from New Bergen, and who had planted there their typical German village called Germania.

Mr. William Radde, of New York, had purchased a large tract of land in Abbott Township, comprising a portion of the original Ole Bull purchase, and his German followers came and cleared and settled this territory early in '56. They bought some of the land and improvements near New Bergen direct from a few of the Norwegians who had already become dissatisfied and discouraged and wished to remove to Wisconsin. For this cleared land the Germans paid on an average of twenty dollars an acre, and the price was paid to the Norwegians in gold coin. The story is told



Oleona Hotel

From a Photograph

of one old Norwegian, thus paid, who put his gold in a pouch strapped around his waist. It happened that he was drowned in fording some river, but his body, with the gold, was afterwards recovered by his sons.

The Germans had come with a more genuine determination than had the Norwegians to organize a truly American commonwealth. It may be that in experience they were better fitted for the work which they had undertaken, or perhaps they were constitutionally so. At all events, they were, from the beginning, markedly more progressive and successful than their Norse cousins.

The German colony grew and prospered rapidly, and within a remarkably short time they were well established in their little village of Germania, with the surrounding hillsides well cleared and turned into profitable farm lands. Nowhere perhaps was German thrift shown to better advantage than in the manner in which they established themselves in so short a time in this Potter County wilderness.

The Germans were essentially pioneers, but not being handicapped by lack of funds and necessities as were the Norwegians, they were more than mere adventurers. They were at once citizens of their adopted country. They adapted themselves to the new conditions and grew up as an essential part of the community in which they lived. Germania very soon became a permanent, well-organized little village, and the sturdy Teu-

tonic character of its inhabitants made it a truly German-American town.

Besides the village church and the schoolhouse, where the German language, history and literature, were taught, there was established the well-known brewery which for many years was operated in connection with the Germania Inn. The Germans were, and are, a whole-souled, social people and this enterprise of old Joseph Schwarzenbach, one of the early settlers, was in response to the general demand from the colonists, men and women alike, that they have their own brew of lager beer, there in their forest-bound town.

It was a small affair, that first brewery, but, like their celebrated "Schuetzen-Verein" which, in after years, became the center of their social life, it moderately fulfilled the wants of these genial people. Although Potter County came under a special prohibitory law about this time, this brewery was allowed to dispense its beer in quantities not less than one gallon; so instead of a stein, the patrons of Schwarzenbach's Inn were provided with cute little wooden kegs, each holding one gallon, and all bound 'round with pretty brass hoops, with a diminutive spigot attached to each.

Night after night the folk of the entire town, emulating the custom of the Vaterland, would gather in the attractive meeting hall of the little inn and partake of their "georgies" of foaming lager, drawn direct from the brewery adjoining. The little keg was placed in the center of the

table and the faucet manipulated by one of the men until the whole party had been served over and over. Then dancing or some entertainment, with a generous "Dutch lunch" would usually follow; and in this happy and congenial way the people cultivated a social life which, for years, has made Germania famous for its hospitality and good cheer.

But they were ever a peaceable, industrious, and law-abiding people. Their family quarrels and neighborhood disputes, if they ever had any, were more often referred to the village doctor for settlement or arbitrated by three good men appointed by him, and the criminal courts of Potter County were never troubled with cases from Germania, any more than they were from Oleona or New Bergen.

Yet the Norwegians, on the other hand, were ever aliens and strangers in a strange land. At best they were adventurers and dreamers. New Bergen was an experiment, and Oleona, with its castle fortress, was an extravagant dream of empire. The easy-going Norsemen never seemed to cope with the difficulties of foreign colonization because they never fully understood or appreciated the spirit of the American pioneer.

At first they looked with much interest at the advent of their German kinsfolk; but as they beheld their increasing numbers and noted their more successful efforts at home-making in the new country, they began to regard them with feelings of slight

jealousy, and even of ill will; and in consequence of this unfriendly spirit, the Germans naturally began to entertain sentiments of distrust and misgivings toward their less favored cousins over the hill.

In short, the Norwegians soon began to dislike the Germans because they did not understand them, and the Germans became unsympathetic because they could not tolerate their foreign and uncongenial ways; so it happened that almost from the first a feeling of antagonism, which would seem wholly inconsistent with their characters, spread between the two peoples; and this unfortunate condition increased in intensity as each began to regard the other as a rival colony, with no patriotic impulses or aims in common.

It is a regrettable fact of history that northern nations of a common origin, whose peoples would most naturally understand and unite with each other, are often the most bitter foes; and yet it must ever be remembered that even our much boasted Anglo-Saxon blood is but a commingled rivulet from the great Scandinavian sea.

Among the Germans there lived at this time a fair-haired, sturdy son of the Fatherland who fully realized all these unfortunate conditions, and whose heart was firmly set on uniting the rival colonies in a spirit of mutual dependence and support.

✓ Karl Wagner was now about twenty-two years of age. He had inherited from his genial old

father a frank and whole-souled disposition, and from his affectionate and hard-working mother his industry and sterling strength of character. These were by no means exceptional traits for a youth of the old high German stock, but Karl possessed in an exceptional degree all of the best and most prominent characteristics of his pure-blooded northern ancestry. With his well developed physique and courageous bearing, he was perhaps the best liked and most trusted young German among his people at Germania, at this early and critical period of its history.

To Karl it had always seemed strange and unnatural that there should be a spirit of rivalry or unfriendliness between his people and the inoffensive Norwegians. It was a condition which aroused every patriotic impulse in his nature. He resolved that, come what may, he would attempt to reconcile their differences, and to unite them as sister communities with aims and purposes in common.

He well knew the difficulties and dangers in this undertaking. The Germans, even his own family and friends, were unrelenting in their attitude; and the Norwegians were becoming more and more prejudiced and suspicious of their unwelcome neighbors.

Quite independent of each other the little villages in southeastern Potter had now become something more than mere unsettled communities. But Germania was united and prosperous, while

all the Norwegian towns had long since begun a struggle for their very existence, amid many discouragements and trials.

Ole Bull had been to great expense in maintaining his colony and providing for its development. He continually gave concerts for its benefit, but often the proceeds failed to reach his people, through the treachery and dishonesty of his agents. He was even intending to charter a vessel to transport emigrants to America, but the expected recruits and supplies had failed to arrive.

Karl realized that without the immediate assistance of the Germans the Norwegian colony would, before another winter, break up in utter failure.

Kettle Creek was almost forbidden territory to him then, but Karl, with a secret promise of loyalty and support from some of his intimate young German friends, determined to go to New Bergen and offer aid to the struggling people there and, if necessary, the financial assistance of the Germans.

He well knew that most of his own people would not approve of this course, and that the Norwegians themselves would doubtless resent his interference in their affairs.

The situation was a delicate one in the extreme, and one fraught with many dangers. Yet Karl knew these people, and had firmly decided to join his fortunes with them rather than let

these conditions continue,—for that would only mean that very soon the heroic Scandinavian venture would disastrously and miserably fail.

CHAPTER VII

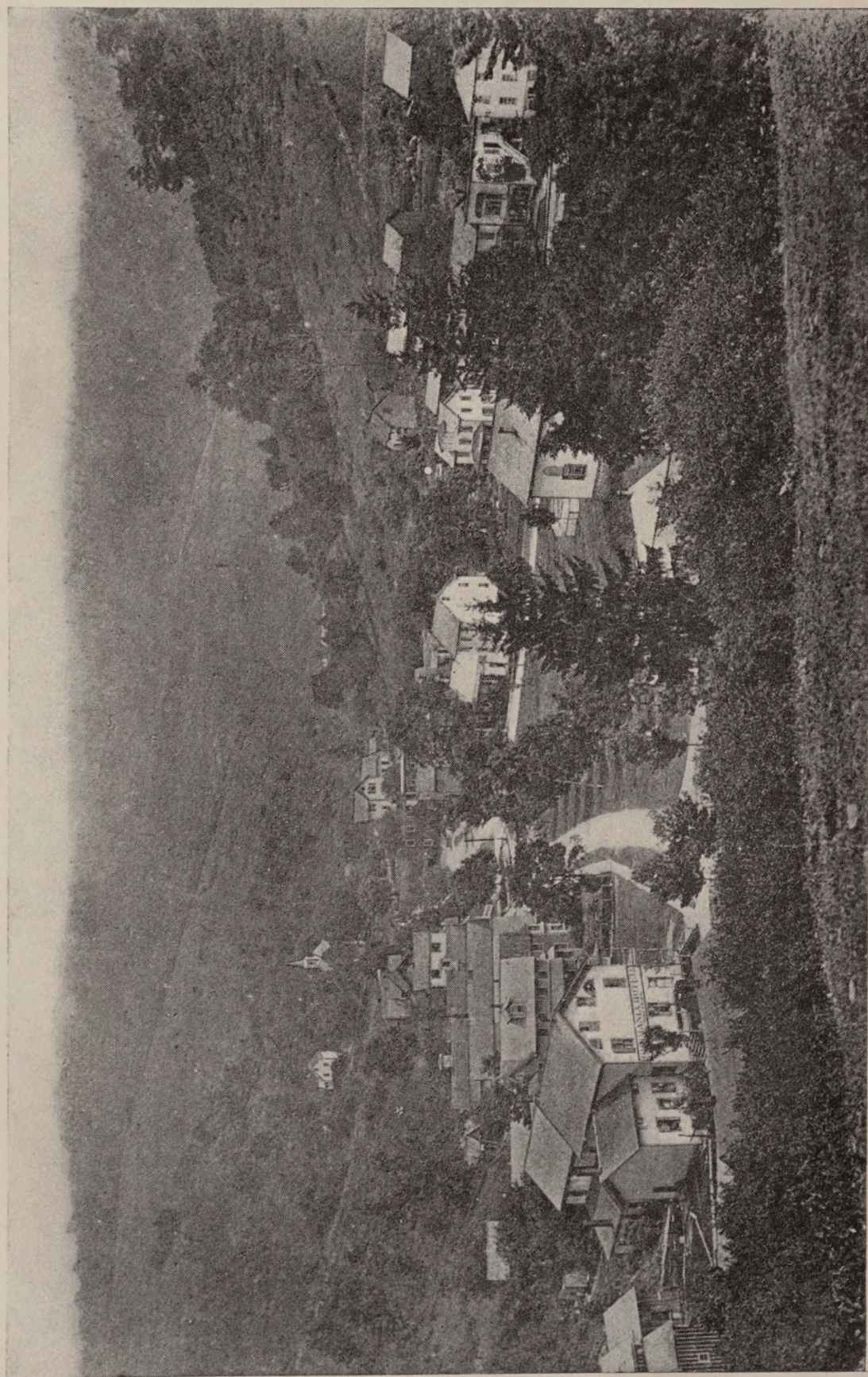
THE MEETING ON LITTLE KETTLE CREEK

IT was a bright warm morning in the summer of that year, 1856, when Karl set out on foot, 'cross country from Germania, and long before noon he reached the bank of Little Kettle Creek which flows past the Norwegian town.

Seating himself on a log beside the stream, Karl was thinking of how he could best approach these people to offer assistance in the face of the indignation, or perhaps worse complication, that any imprudent action on his part would be sure to arouse. The more he studied the delicate situation the more perplexed he became.

Pondering there, he was suddenly aroused from his reverie by the sound of someone coming down the narrow path leading to the stream. He arose quickly and, turning, stood almost face to face with a young girl,—one whom he had never seen before on any of his friendly visits to New Bergen.

It was Olea. She was dressed in a bright red jacket with close-fitting bodice over a white blouse with short sleeves. A peculiar winged head-dress rested jauntily on the back of her head, her



Germania of To-Day

From a Photograph

light hair falling loosely from beneath. She wore a stomacher of pretty colored beads, and at her throat hung a pale old-fashioned brooch in a scroll setting of very dull gold. By her side trotted a large shepherd dog, and he was sniffing the air suspiciously as if he scented some hidden danger to his mistress.

Olea was softly humming to herself and seemed quite unconscious of the presence of anyone else until she came abruptly upon Karl. She drew back a step or two, and the dog barked sharply in sudden alarm. But in a moment she was reassured by Karl's embarrassed smile as he politely removed his cap and bowed awkwardly. Coloring slightly, she said meekly, "Pardon me, Sir; I did not see you." "You will pardon me, Miss," replied Karl, in German, and then he added rather shyly: "Perhaps I am intruding?" "You are from over the hill, nicht wahr?", she asked somewhat sharply, in his own tongue, "Sie sind ein Deutscher?" And then, noticing his rising color, she added quickly, "But these woods are yours as well as mine. My Father knows the Germans well. No, you are not intruding here." And she partly turned to go, as she called to the dog, now barking loudly at Karl's heels. "Yes, Miss," he said, "I am a German. But I know and like your people well. I want to help them." He hesitated, and then, in a confused, simple way added, "From my heart I wish all the Norwegians nothing but good." Olea halted a moment, and

smiling sweetly, almost sadly, as a pretty color suffused her cheeks, she said quietly: "Then you will always be welcome at New Bergen." And with a little apparent agitation, she passed quickly down the narrow winding ravine, and was lost from sight in the thick foliage which swished back across the pathway.

Karl did not make much progress, in a philanthropic way, that day; but for weeks after this simple incident the beautiful face of Olea, as she appeared to him that summer morning, rose again and again in his mind. And he thought of her as she turned away from him, after their first chance meeting by the brook, with the well-remembered words on her lips: "Then you will always be welcome at New Bergen," and he wondered whether he would meet her again, and ever really would be welcome at her plain Norwegian home.

During the following months Karl made frequent trips to Oleona and New Bergen, and gradually made many acquaintances and friendships among the people there. Slowly he was beginning to get their confidence, and he was quietly perfecting his plans for the relief of the unfortunate colonists.

Indeed they very soon began to look upon Karl with some degree of cordiality, and many of these dependent people relied on and trusted him implicitly.

Yet he seldom saw at New Bergen the one he

The Meeting on Little Kettle Creek 41

wanted to see most of all,—the girl whom he had met for one brief moment beside the stream, and whose unseen presence had been almost constantly in his mind ever since.

One day as he was riding slowly along the turnpike, he came unexpectedly upon Olea as she was picking wild blackberries by the side of the road not far from her home. She had recognized him and smiled,—a crimson color showing itself in her face; but before he could return her greeting, in his embarrassment he had dropped the reins, and his horse, starting suddenly, galloped wildly far up the road before he could regain control over him.

Karl was chagrined and disappointed, but the opportunity of meeting Olea again, and of furthering his quixotic plans, was not long delayed.

CHAPTER VIII

THE LAST PARTY AT OLE BULL'S CASTLE

ONE day late in October, as Karl was riding past the low curved-roofed store and village "headquarters" at the forks of the road near the foot of the hill, some young Norwegians, Helga Olson among them, called out loudly to him, and Karl reined up his horse, quite out of breath and excited.

They cordially greeted him, and invited him to join them the next evening at a party at Ole Bull's castle. "Ole Bull is back again to help us," Helga said, "and he will play for us; we can dance at the castle and have a jolly time once more. You would n't mind joining us for an evening, would you Karl?"

Karl thanked them heartily for the long-wished-for invitation and promptly accepted. As he rode up the hill he again called out to them, "You can count on me, boys. I will surely come over."

Karl had heard of those famous parties at Ole Bull's castle. And he knew that Olea would be there, and he was strangely impatient to meet her again; more than that, with Ole Bull and all his people there together, perhaps for the last time,

Karl hoped that he would find the opportunity of offering the much-needed assistance of the Germans to these discouraged and despondent people.

Yet he felt that he was going there against the will of nearly all of his German friends, who had by this time surmised something of Karl's motives in cultivating the friendship of the disliked Norwegians; moreover, they had heard of Olea, and had begun to suspect the attachment that was growing up between them.

As Karl rode away that night his stern old father cautioned him to remember his position at Germania, and to do nothing that might implicate his people in the desperate condition of affairs confronting the Norwegians.

But what is prosaic caution when love and duty are both at stake?

And what a glorious evening it was,—that last party at the old castle! Ole Bull, jovial and kindly, welcomed them one and all, and played matchless selections on his old violin, playing as he had never played before, it seemed to them.

All the young men and maidens, and most of the settlers along Kettle Creek came to the castle that night to greet their beloved leader. Olea, of course, was there,—more radiant and beautiful than Karl had ever dreamed she was.

As softly the sweet notes of the violin, in the hands of the great musician, began to be heard in the rustic pavilion, the dancing began, and Karl gallantly asked Olea for the first round waltz.

How the memories of that dance lingered in Karl's mind for many days and years thereafter! The youthful dancers glided on and on, in perfect harmony with the rhythm of the music, into a sea of eternal bliss,—it seemed to Karl. One by one the couples stopped dancing and watched the graceful pair, as, never tiring, they swept by,—now fast, now slow, as the master hand alternated the music,—Karl boldly leading, while she, demure and beautiful, followed with a light and graceful step. Her face was near to his, and she whispered something to him, softly, in German, and he answered,—something, he did not know exactly what.

Almost too soon the waltz was over and Karl seated Olea, followed by the admiring glances of all the dancers. “Bravo, Karl! Lang lebe die Deutschen!”, rang loudly in his ears. “Here’s to the Daughter of the North!”, shouted one of the men, as he raised a stein of fresh brewed beer to his lips. “And here’s to her worthy partner from the Fatherland!”, rejoined another of the company. Then someone proposed a song, and they all joined in singing the national hymn and their favorite Norske folk-songs; then, in compliment to Karl, they sang *Die Lorelei* and *Die Wacht am Rhein*, in German. “Now Karl, you and Olea must sing,” several called out at once, after they had finished and were seated again. After some hesitation, the two sang together,—one of the old ballads from Landstad’s *Folkwiser*,

which they had each known since childhood,—Olea singing in a clear soft soprano, and Karl accompanying with his deep rich bass. Then Olea sang alone,—a simple Norwegian love song; and Karl stood by and watched her, and thought how innocent and beautiful she was, and how supremely happy he felt in being near her.

Soon a bountiful supper of trout and venison and brown bread and cake, with pitchers of foaming dark lager beer, was served in the dance hall; and,—

“Meanwhile, from out its ebon case
His violin the Minstrel drew,
And, having tuned its strings anew,
Now held it close in his embrace,
And poising in his outstretched hand
The bow, like a magician's wand,
He paused, and said, with beaming face:
'Last night my story was too long;
To-day I give you but a song,
An old tradition of the North.' ”

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Then they joined in the famous “Halling dance,” and all sang and danced again until at length the gray dawn began to lighten the eastern hemlocks, which threw fantastic silhouettes 'gainst the morning sky,—faintly gleaming, like the pale aurora of the north, in their own “Land of the Midnight Sun.”

After many expressions of confidence, some important plans for the relief of the colonists were

discussed, frankly and at length, much to Karl's gratification.

But all too soon the reluctant farewells were said, and Karl saddled Olea's shaggy little pony and, helping her to mount, rode beside her down the wide mountain roadway, which was just being cleared, to the water's edge, and on up the main road to the corners at the "Lion Tent" where the straggling revelers were separating for their homes.

As they slowly turned up the valley leading to New Bergen, the sun was just tipping the western mountains with a golden light, and the wild birds were chirping their morning carols from the dew-covered bushes which bended close across the narrow road. Impressed with the fresh sweetness of the morning, they rode along in silence, listening to the sweet melody of the birds and stream.

They reached the settlement in advance of the others, and, alighting in front of Olea's home, they sat down on the rustic bench beside the spring. Then impulsively, almost abruptly, Karl told Olea of his love for her,—of his plans for her future and his,—of his hope of uniting their people. He spoke earnestly and tenderly, and when he had finished he was standing beside her, helpless and confused. Olea was half embarrassed, half alarmed. She was silent for a moment, and then turning towards him with an innocent smile, she said meekly: "Ich liebe dich, Karl," and she buried her flushed face on his shoulder as he drew her close to him and held her there.

Withdrawing herself in an instant from his arms, she told him earnestly and frankly how many things stood in the way of their happiness,—of the probable objections of his people and hers, and of the deep-seated jealousy she knew, as well as he, existed among them.

For a few minutes they remained standing there by the spring, plainly outlined against the morning sky, quite oblivious of their position,—thinking, for the moment, only of themselves, and of their own happiness in being together.

Coming suddenly into view around the turn in the road, Olea's father, with Helga and some others of the returning party, saw them standing there,—and Karl, confused and embarrassed, turned to greet them. Olea, with flaming cheeks, fled quickly into the house. Her father and the young Norwegians, coming up, began to jeer at Karl until, in anger, he rushed from them, and, leaping onto his horse, he galloped furiously up the road towards Germania, with their threats and insults ringing in his ears.

CHAPTER IX

THE HICKS OF THE POND-HOLES

AT the extreme head of Little Kettle Creek, about four miles above New Bergen, and almost beyond where any water runs, there is a curious natural formation on the "hog's back" where Pine Creek and Sinnamahoning waters meet.

The steep hills, prominent and regular, coming abruptly together, form a little notch between them, inclosing a level strip of land, perhaps four rods wide and twice as long, with a natural roadway at the foot of each hill on either side. Equidistant, in this flat ravine are three distinct water-pools or pond-holes, perhaps six or eight feet deep, with a few feet of nice, level ground between them. Just beyond the third water-hole a sharp ledge of rocks drops off abruptly into the West Branch of Pine Creek; while on the other side the ravine gradually widens into the valley of the Kettle Creeks.

These pond-holes, apparently, are not connected, but remain full of clear, limpid water; they resemble tiny reservoirs which perpetually supply



Ole Bull

Drawing by Darley

the two great tributaries of the Susquehanna. But if they should be joined together by a pipe or ditch, the water might easily be made to flow in either direction from these common but divergent sources of the same great river; and a water circle hundreds of miles in circumference might thus be completed, the diameter of which would extend from the tiny pools above New Bergen far across the Alleghenies down to Jersey Shore.

In the side of the mountain near these pond-holes, a flat ledge of rocks, with a small opening between the strata, slants back into the hills. Beyond this rock tunnel, through which one might crawl on his hands and knees, there is a huge natural cave, about thirty feet square and ten or twelve feet high, and which is accessible only from the ravine crevice.

This mountain cavern in the apex of the dividing ridge had, in years gone by, been a convenient rendezvous for bands of mountaineers and desperate characters who infested these parts at frequent intervals, or whenever they were driven out of the lumbering districts and "log drives" along Pine Creek and the Sinnamahoning. The isolated location of the retreat afforded, as well, a convenient crossing between two immense hemlock and pine timber belts,—regions which were beginning to be operated, and which were equally exposed to the depredations of these bandits of the hills. "Hicks," they came to be called, in the later parlance of the time, because

they were characters peculiar to the lumber regions and products of an industrial age which has long since passed away. The typical Potter County "Hick" of a decade ago had developed certain virtues as well as most of the faults peculiar to his kind, and for viciousness of character and general lawlessness was not to be compared with his prototype of the early fifties, who subscribed to no such code of law or morals as afterwards prevailed in the lumber regions.

Before the development of the industry, years before the coming of the big mills and tanneries which denuded these hills of their virgin forests, the typical woods-man was essentially a rough mountaineer; while the genuine "Hick" of a generation later was a product of peculiar but better organized social and economic conditions.

In the early days a "still" for making "moonshine" whiskey had been operated at the pond-holes, and the interior recesses of the cave once contained part of a kit of tools which were used by a gang of counterfeiters who occasionally took possession of this retreat to "polish off the queer."

The German settlers, as well as the guileless Norwegians, were naturally easy prey for these Hicks and desperate marauders, who not only plundered their stores and stole their grain to make "moonshine" whiskey, but they also passed off on them, or "shoved," their counterfeit money in exchange for the good coin of the colonists. A gallon of "mountain dew" was worth, at Oleona

or Germania, sometimes as much as five dollars in gold, and "metal money" became as plentiful there as good money and provisions had become scarce,—an alarming condition in which the settlers were held at the absolute mercy of this dreaded band of plunderers and thieves.

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As Karl, in a most despondent mood, rode up the hill that autumn morning, he chanced to look across the valley which spread out towards the twin hills inclosing the little pond-holes of the Susquehanna.

The fog was just lifting before the rising sun and the distant mountains stood out clear and distinct against the morning sky. Almost imperceptible on the far horizon a tiny thread of blue smoke curled upwards through the hemlocks and vanished in the hazy air. Karl watched it, then lost it, then found it again,—now hanging like a thin gray mist between the double crags.

With a sudden impulse or determination, Karl wheeled his horse down a side-path to the stream a mile beyond, and, tying him there, took a circuitous route through the forest to the head of Little Kettle Creek.

He approached the notch in the hills from along the cliff on the West Branch side of the pond-holes and was thus able to crawl near to the entrance of the cave and to crouch on the ledge of rocks directly over it, without being seen from the narrow ravine below. As he reached this secluded posi-

tion he beheld a motley crowd of some ten or a dozen rough-looking men, seated around a rickety table in front of the cave, or "lobby," devouring a breakfast of "moonshine" and fried fish. They were dressed like the typical "Hick" of the lumber regions, in a style as grotesque and peculiar as ever characterized the woodman's kind. The broad brims of their black slouch hats were turned squarely up in front and down at the back, giving them a picturesque and semi-military effect. Their heavy, red, woolen jackets were open at the throat, with the sleeves rolled up, and the waist was drawn tight and tied in a great knot at the back, causing their wearers to look hump-backed or deformed. Their blue overalls, caught by a strap over one shoulder, were rolled up at the bottom, halfway to the knee, leaving the thick red leggings to hang over the tops of their heavy-laced shoes. These shoes had soles an inch thick, which were closely fitted with hobnails or sharp spikes. Thus equipped, with his spud and calked boots, a Hick was usually perfectly sure on foot in the lumber-woods, and equally safe and well protected in a camp fight or brawl.

With the exception of an old shotgun and a couple of thirty-two rifles and a few rusty "cant-hooks" or "pike-levers," no more formidable weapons were in evidence in the camp at the pond-holes; but the Hicks were loud and boisterous, though seemingly good-natured that morning, as they had evidently been "hitting up" the "mount-

ain dew" while breakfast was being prepared by the "Cookie."

Karl, from his hiding place in the rocks, could easily overhear the banter and conversation below, and, to his surprise, the subject was boastingly turned on a proposed "raid on the natives"—as the leader, a powerful Hick with a deep scar across his face, had expressed it to a "pal" who was just emerging from the cave. "We gotter 'ave more grub in this 'ere camp,—an' d—— quick tew! 'An how'n h—— can we git booze wi'out mash to run 'er from,—that 's what I wan' tew know?" he howled, as he brought a red, wrinkled fist down on the table with a bang, upsetting the trout skillet into the fire and knocking over an improvised seat as he dug his calked heel into a log by the pond-hole. "D 'ye Hicks think we kin live on punk dollers all winter? They don't wash down wid me worth a d—— an' I 'll swap 'em fer swag any ol' time, an' they don't hev t' roll me t' git 'em, eether,—y' kin betcher sweet life! W'at we want 'round here is more red licker and chuck, an' less o' this 'ere junk," he yelled, as he glared at the formidable group about him, as if to see if anyone dared disagree with his convincing remarks.

Noting no signs of rebellion nor qualms of conscience in his faithful band, he continued, in a more subdued and confidential tone, "Them damfool Norwegens down the crick there,"—jerking his big thumb over his shoulder, "an' them igrant, stingy Dutchmen at Germanie,—them

fellers ha' got th' provinder, ye betcher boots! An' thers grain 'nuff rottin' in them shacks o' thern to make grog fer this 'ere camp all winter,—'an chuck e' nuff to las' till leek diggin' time. Now, says I, I 'm fer foraging a few! We 'll raid them foreeners and organize this 'ere camp right! Wha' d' ye Hicks say to makin' a haul—tonite—'bout midnite—we 'll divide the gang an' paralyze that hull outfit—and make 'em dig up? Hey, Shorty?"

This brilliant plot being thus unfolded, the pals expressed their appreciation by all taking a drink; between gulps and coughing fits, they grunted their unqualified approval of the raid.

Suggestions for its consummation came thick and fast, and the self-constituted leader thundered and pounded for silence as he outlined his ingenious plans to them, and assigned to each man his particular part and post of duty in the night's bold adventure.

Karl, concealed on the ledge above them, was eagerly listening to the details of the proposed raid, when, in turning slightly to relieve his cramped position, he accidentally unloosed a small boulder which rolled off the embankment and fell with a sharp crash on the rocks directly in front of the cave. Instantly the mountaineers sprang to their feet, and three of them clambered up the steep bank followed closely by some of the others, the brawny captain yelling out, "What in h—— are ye firing rocks down 'ere fer, ye lout?

This 'ere camp haint no shootin' gallery fer dagos likes o' ye! Rout him out o' there, y' Hicks!" Karl jumped to his feet only to find his retreat down the gully cut off by the three fellows staggering towards him. He quickly resolved to make the best of a bad situation by calling out, cheerily "Hello, there! Which way is it down to the West Branch?" The men stopped and eyed him suspiciously, then one answered: "Wall, Stranger, it ain't on top o' a feller's shanty,—ner under them 'air pond-hulls neethyr. If it's a drink yere looking arter, guess we kin 'commodate yer tho'. Come alang down 'ere!" So saying, they surrounded Karl and together they rolled and slid down to the foot of the bluff where the others awaited them.

Karl heard one of the Hicks mutter, "O, h——, it's unly one o' them igrant Dutchmun! Dutcher'n sour-kroust! He mocks nix 'ous! Herous mit 'em!" The Captain snorted, "Young fellar, what 'er ye snoopin' 'round 'ere fer enyway, hey? If yere Dutch 'lations don't need yer 'round Germanie, I 'm thinkin' ye 'd better stick aroun' here an' 'elp keep camp terday. We'll see that yer wont be pokin' yer Dutch nose in decent folks' bizzniss. Here you, Shorty! Wind that air grab chain 'round his shanks and lead him inter th' parler, whare he wunt be buttin' in agin till we git reddy ter break camp."

Realizing that he was a prisoner in their hands, Karl, feigning innocence of their motives, tried

to pacify and reason with them; but the outlaws were in no mood for trifling. Shorty picked up a rope and led the way, on his hands and knees, into the cave, commanding Karl to follow him, while the Captain crawled behind them, puffing and cursing at every move.

Inside the cave a dim light flickered from a smoky lantern on a small table; on one side were piled a lot of tools and some luggage, and on the other, against the wall, some bunks of hemlock boughs had been arranged.

With Shorty's assistance, the Captain tied Karl's hands and feet and fastened the end of the rope through an iron in a long pine post which was firmly driven into a crevice in the rocks. Karl was thoroughly alarmed at the turn affairs had taken, but at length, he was somewhat relieved when the Captain sarcastically leered, "Ye kin jest make yerself to hum 'round hyer, Dutchy, an' mebbly ter-morrer the travelin' 'ill be better fer yer—on ther West Branch, er down the Sinna-mahone." Then, with a chuckle with his companion, he brawled out, with cheerful consideration, "Bring him a taste o' mountin dew an' a fried sucker fer dinner, Shorty; an' see that he don't git rolled, ner slip the halter, neether,—them Dutch 'er h—— fer travelin'!"

So saying, both gentlemen of the grotto, chuckling at their own cleverness and wit, crawled out through the narrow tunnel, leaving Karl to the desolation of the murky cavern.

CHAPTER X

THE NIGHT RAID

THE Hicks were not certain that Karl had overheard any of their plans for the raid on the settlers; but they were not men who take many chances, so they decided to keep Karl a prisoner until the night's work was done, and then send him on his way, harmless and unsuspecting.

They mistook Karl for the "igrant Dutchman" they had dubbed him, and it was quite beyond their comprehension that he could make them any real trouble; still, they considered it safest to hold him for a while at least, to prevent any possible alarm or suspicions he might arouse.

So the day dragged on and the merry mountaineers drank and smoked, and played cards and slept around the pond-holes, until darkness finally came; then they built a rousing camp-fire and cooked their supper and made their final preparations for the "raid on the natives."

Karl put in a lonesome, dreary day on an uncomfortable bunk in the dismal cave; but he knew better than to try to escape by daylight, so he played his stupid part, ate the fried fish that

Shorty brought him and tasted a sip of the "moonshine" which, despite its rawness, revived his spirits somewhat as he carefully thought out his plans for action.

Along towards midnight the Captain and Shorty appeared in the cave, both very much the worse for liquor; they roughly pulled at the rope to see if Karl was securely tied; then the Captain, with an oath, informed his prisoner that it was "too d—— hot fer gen'lemen to sleep in the parler—the likes o' ye kin snooze hyer—th' smoonslight 's good 'nuff fer me! Don' let the porkys 'sturb yer res'—s' long, Dutchy!"—and he took an old pile of bags and a big black satchel and crawled back through the tunnel, yelling to Shorty to fetch the lantern and help him haul out his load.

Occasional sounds, brawlings and cursings, came to Karl through the grotto opening, but gradually they grew faint and discordant, and soon all was quiet as a silent tomb.

Cautiously Karl crawled from the bunk where he lay and, placing his broad shoulders against the solid wall of the cavern, began to pull steadily on the rope fastened to the post in the rocks. It was as fixed and solid as a pine stump, not budging an inch, though Karl, without the use of his hands, pulled and tugged with all the strength he could command.

At last, when he was nearly exhausted and his shoulders and back had begun to bleed and pain him, he thought he felt a slight slack in the rope

and he nerved himself for a final effort. Bracing himself firmly against the rocks, he gave a mighty tug, and the long post slipped from the crevice and fell to the earthen floor with a thud. With fresh vigor Karl groped at the end of his rope in the darkness, when accidentally his foot struck against the half-buried handle of an old grub-hoe; kneeling down he felt the soft, green moss covering it as it lay in the damp clay. Loosening it, he ran his tied hands along the handle until he felt the cold, dull blade of the old hoe; then working his hands slowly up and down the rusty iron edge he felt the rope grating and wearing away. It was tedious work, but finally the last strand snapped and freed his benumbed hands; he quickly untied his feet and stood up in the cave, dazed but determined.

Stealthily he crawled through the tunnel till he could see the flickering camp-fire near the pond-hole. Seated on a box near the table, with his arms outstretched upon it and his head pillowed in them, reposed one of the mountaineers; a companion sprawled on a blanket in front of the fire; a half-filled bottle and two tin cups stood on the table, and Karl knew at a glance that his guards were dead drunk, for the man on the table was mumbling in an incoherent way and the other one snored loudly and heavily.

Silently Karl slipped through the narrow opening of the cavern and made a quick dash for the woods. Looking back, as he ran, he saw the two

Hicks there in the glow of the camp-fire, sprawling out, unconscious and undisturbed.

He ran most of the way down the dark valley, across the stream to the place where he had tied his horse in the early morning. The hungry little animal gave a low whinny of recognition as Karl mounted and galloped furiously down the creek to the main road leading to New Bergen.

Karl surmised that the outlaws would attempt to rob the well-filled barn of Knude Ericsson first; so he dismounted, and, making a short detour of the house, he crossed the stream and groped his way up the path leading to his place. When he neared the little barn he stopped and listened intently, but not a sound was heard, so he cautiously slipped up to the house and knocked softly on the door. The shepherd dog barked sharply, but Karl repeated the rap, and a man's voice from within muttered sleepily, "Ach! Who is it?" Karl rattled the latch very carefully. With a grunt, the big Norwegian sprang from his bed and opened the door. He was about to call out in a loud voice, but Karl's uplifted hand warned him. "Hist!" he whispered. "It's Karl. Quick! the Hicks are coming!" He slid inside, and in a low voice told Knude to get ready, and in a jiffy the old fellow was dressed and standing beside Karl, with a huge club in his hand, ready for battle. From a little side bedroom a low frightened voice called out, "Karl! Karl! Was ist es?" "Robbers!" whispered Karl. "Stay there, Olea. We will soon

be back"—as he and her father slipped out into the darkness and crept 'round the building.

As they did so, they indistinctly recognized the figures of several men near the little barn. Coming nearer they saw that one of the men was filling a bag with corn, and another was loading some plunder into a big sack held by a third robber. At a signal from Karl the two men uttered a terrific shriek and fell upon the mountaineers before they had time to move from their tracks. The old giant swung right and left with his club and at his first blow one of the Hicks was sprawling senseless on the ground. Karl grappled with the big Captain who shouted to his pals to stand and help him. But the Hicks ran, terror-stricken, in every direction,—some into the creek and others over the fences into the highway, leaving their leader to fight it out with Karl alone. One or two shots were fired, which, added to the general uproar, brought the people from the houses in general confusion, and among them came Helga Olson, already equipped for the fray.

Meanwhile, Karl fought with the Captain, who succeeded in dealing him some brutal kicks with his spiked shoes; but Karl met his second onrush, and, with a full blow in the face, knocked the brawny Hick to the ground. Knude Ericsson fell upon him and half strangled him in his mighty grip, while Karl slipped a sack over his head and the two mountaineers were captured, as their pals slunk away in the darkness.

The bound prisoners (the other captured Hick proved to be the dauntless Shorty) were locked in the rear of the corner store till morning. Helga, wishing no doubt to have some part in the adventure, volunteered to escort the two outlaws to the county-seat,—which he did on the morrow, and safely lodged them both in the Coudersport jail.

After the excitement of the night had subsided, they all repaired to Ericsson's house where Karl related his experiences with the Hicks at the pond-holes, omitting, however, to state that he had been tied hand and foot for a whole day, and how he had planned his escape to warn the Norwegians.

But the people well guessed his good motives by the result of his exploit, and were loud in their praises, thanking Karl again and again for his courageous action. Olea was especially happy and proud of her hero as she saw her people rally 'round him; and she knew that the events of the night had done much to change the strained relations of the two communities.

She brought bandages and bound up Karl's ugly spike wounds, which were very painful, though not serious; and she watched over him till morning when Syken Knude graciously offered to take him to Germania, where the reports of the attempted raid on the settlers had preceded them. The big Norwegian was almost as much of a hero as Karl at Germania, for both peoples had suddenly come to realize that they were really bound together

by many common ties, for their mutual protection and support.

At daybreak a party of Norwegians and Germans went up to the head of Little Kettle Creek, but they found only a smouldering camp-fire and some empty bottles and rubbish scattered 'round the cave. The stalwart Hicks had hurriedly abandoned their merry rendezvous at the little pond-holes.

CHAPTER XI

THE "WILD BOY"

THE East Fork of the Sinnamahoning is, as has been stated, one of the principal tributaries of the Susquehanna.

Although somewhat removed from the early scenes of trial and privation which Kettle Creek knew in its colonization days, this country has a history, which, while not as important here perhaps, is nevertheless full of local interest and charm.

Before the timber was removed from the hills, the East Fork was a favorite resort of hunters and fishermen who frequented these parts in the summer and fall and camped on the streams or "put up" at the cabins of the hospitable natives. The main branch is a beautiful stream, with the numerous little runs emptying into it from each side,—the Shingle Bolt, Horton Run, Elk Lick, the Wild Boy, Reed's, Brooks's, and Stone Runs,—a veritable jumble of pure mountain rivulets surge out of these forests!

In these western hills, somewhere near the head of the East Fork, there lived at this time,

in the seclusion of the wilderness, a strange and solitary person,—a hermit of the mountains.

Who he was, or what he was, or how he came to lead this lonely and secluded life no one seemed to know. Very few persons had ever actually seen him, so to most people there he was more of a strange myth or superstition than any real person.

Karl had seen him, or thought he had, rather, on one of his hunting trips into the East Fork district; and a few old settlers along the creek had occasionally told that they had seen a man, or boy (for it seemed that he appeared quite young despite his long hair and grim features), when they had been deer or bear hunting far up on the barrens towards the "Black Hole."

It was said that when seen he would always utter a fierce, unintelligible cry and quickly disappear into the woods. The general belief was that he lived in a log hut near the head of one of the branches of the East Fork; that he lived on trout and venison and wild berries, and wore rough clothing of bear and deer skins, with a fur cap and patched leather boots.

An old and respected settler, who first cleared a small farm and built a log cabin at the mouth of the Wild Boy,—a pioneer of Sinnamahoning who for many years lived there with his hospitable family, and entertained the hunters and fishermen who frequently came to this beautiful spot in the mountains to eat of his venison and hear his droll stories, or perchance to camp for a week in the

cabin across the East Fork,—glorious memories these of a country forever mystic and sweet in its primitive charm,—well, this old pioneer loved dearly to tell, in a quaint and characteristic way, which would fill a young listener with awe and amazement, of the fame and career of the “Wild Boy.”

To the credulous inquirer, he would, with a grave and solemn mien quite his own, make it appear that the “Wild Boy” was a ferocious and terrible creature,—half man and half beast! And that only the bravest fisherman dared venture very far up the stream, in the evening, for fear of being attacked and perhaps dragged to the hut of this fierce demon who lived on the plunder that fell across his path.

Then again, to the old hunters and fishermen, sitting 'round the gnat smudge in front of his cabin, nodding and smoking their pipes, this old pioneer would admit, with a sly wink and lisping drawl, that the “Wild Boy” was no fabulous monster but was only a melancholy, half-demented fellow by the name of Reed; that he was as silent and uncouth as he was harmless and kind; and that was all the real information old Sammy was ever able or willing to impart concerning him.

From these numerous stories and legends, and partly because of the general superstition of the natives themselves, it came to be generally believed that such a character really did exist somewhere in the East Fork country, but nothing

more definite was actually known of him or his history.

So, through positive terror and fear of this unknown denizen of the forest, he became known far and wide, throughout all these regions, as the "Wild Boy"; and the little stream upon which he was supposed to dwell took the same name, which, throughout all the changes and subsequent history of busy "Hulltown," it has retained to this day.

CHAPTER XII

THE QUEST OF THE "HOG'S BACK"

IT was early in the following December when Karl, one morning, shouldered his gun and started out 'cross country to reach the old turnpike, intending to be gone several days on a still hunt for deer, which at that season were always plentiful in the forests of southeastern Potter.

A light tracking snow had fallen the night before, which glistened and sparkled, and the air was clear and cutting cold as he tramped over the ridges, following the unbroken trail along the "hog's back" which stretched like an irregular chalk-line, scintillating through the dark green pall of the hemlocks.

Long before midday he had passed the "Three Sisters" and crossed Hopper House hollow, resting for a while at the shanty which was then, and for years afterwards, dignified by the name of "The Hopper House," a turnpike stopping place recalling memories of old John Hopper, whose venture-some spouse, it is said, had raised the national banners at the "Lion Tent," a few years before.

Here and there in the snow Karl noticed with

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interest the tiny tracks of the red squirrels as they circled 'round the fallen trees and led to the hollows within, where, safe from the enemies of the woods, the frisky fellows, with stored acorns and beech-nuts a-plenty, await the coming of spring.

For a mile or more along the turnpike the young hunter followed the fresh track of a fox, as, with one round footprint ahead of the other, he kept a straight course by the roadside until he reached the high ground, where the sly rascal had back-tracked and leaped far out of the road to some rocks, there to breakfast perchance on a rabbit or bird.

Near the Cross Fork junction Karl saw some large claw-like tracks of a black bear which had, he well guessed, crossed the road in the early morning and plunged straight ahead into the thickest of brambles and bushes, as the beast, with marvelous precision and strength had pursued his uninterrupted way through the windfalls and barrens to some inaccessible den in the thick of the jungles.

Towards nightfall Karl began to grow somewhat tired and footsore. Not finding fresh signs of big game to his liking, he decided to camp for the night at a deserted hunter's cabin at Cherry Springs. This old log hut stood near the site of the famed forest inn, known later as the Cherry Springs Hotel, which for many years stood alone in this clearing in the wilderness,—the only human habitation for ten or fifteen miles in either direction.

Karl bagged a fat partridge from a covey that put up from a bed of wet leaves and moss under the beech trees, and, in coming across the chestnut ridge east of the "Springs," he shot a large black squirrel, which was chattering loudly high up in the chestnut timber. He dressed his game and broiled it on the coals in the open fireplace in the old cabin, and soon after his supper he stretched out to rest on the hemlock boughs before the fire.

The bristling and busy hedgehogs, prowling 'round the cabin, kept him awake for a while with their gnawing and grunting, but Karl was soon sound asleep and up the next morning at daybreak. After breakfast he struck out at a brisk gait for Shingle-bolt hollow, leaving the turnpike and turning south into the East Fork country, where he knew he was sure to find deer.

On his tramp during the day Karl noticed many little pointed sheep-like tracks in the snow, which crisscrossed each other in a bewildering maze; he found a few places where the timid animals had, evidently some nights before, wallowed and fed, and, with the first blush of dawn, had probably scampered away to some sheltered retreat on the highest point on the hills. He closely examined the bushes where the deer had nibbled the bark, showing plainly that they were hungry and feeding, so Karl determined to push on to the head of Horton Run and spend the next night watching the "lick" which was located there.

This famous old deer-lick was hidden within a

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laurel swamp on a small tract of level low ground on the divide near the head of the Horton; being on a runway, which deer always follow, it was most favorably located in a natural feeding and stamping ground. Occasionally some old hunter or trapper would "salt the lick," as they called it, and they had built there, in the forks of a big beech tree, about twenty-five feet from the ground, a small sheltered platform on which the deer hunter would perch and silently await, throughout the long night, the coming of an unsuspecting deer.

Karl reached the Horton about nightfall and examined the lick, finding that it had been recently "salted"; he knew that, although it was late in the season for watching a lick, if the weather kept lowery and the wind from the south, the chances that night would be fair, at least, for big game. Without building a fire or disturbing the slushy bottoms of the lick, Karl ate a cold lunch, a biscuit and piece of fried meat from his hunting bag, and, clambering to the blind, he turned up his fur collar, put on his woolen mittens, cocked his gun, rested it across his knees, and waited.

Towards midnight the wind began to increase a little, then a wet snow commenced falling; Karl was almost numb with cold, and was nodding in spite of himself, against the mossy side of the big tree. Save the creaking of the swaying branches, and the monotonous whistle of the wind through the frozen tree-tops, not a sound broke the silent watch of

the somber night. Yet now and then a grunting porcupine would come down to the lick and gnaw on a salty limb for a few minutes and then wobble away into the underbrush; from far away, where a fluffy bird huddled high in a hemlock, or from some lonely pine on the top of the opposite mountain, came, at regular intervals, the dismal and melancholy call of a solitary hoot-owl, the faint echo leaving the deserted and lonesome swamp-ground as silent as before.

It must have been nearly morning when Karl was aroused by a sharp snorting sound coming from some little distance from the lick. He straightened up and listened, but immediately all was quiet again. In a few minutes a twig snapped and Karl distinctly heard something pawing vigorously in the direction of the north runway. It was not quite light enough to see well, but Karl peered fixedly in the direction of the sound. Indistinctly against the white snow-covered surface of the north end of the lick, a bulky animal form appeared through the thicket, followed closely by a second, and then by a third form, the last so much smaller than the others that he could hardly distinguish its outline between the two larger ones. Karl knew that one of the animals was undoubtedly a large buck, probably with a doe and young fawn.

As they were pawing and circling around in the lick, Karl thought he could make out the huge antlers of the buck; deliberately he took careful

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aim between them. At the crack of his gun a loud snort went up, then a splashing and crashing in the underbrush and slush, as the doe and fawn dashed madly away. A low gurgling sound arose from the edge of the lick, which told Karl that his aim had been true. He quickly slid down from the blind and ran to the dying deer. He was a magnificent fellow; immense in his proud proportions, and with a beautiful pair of horns which resembled the branching pronged antlers of an elk. Truly the red deer is a magnificent animal; and in Potter County indeed the proud monarch of all he surveys!

At daybreak Karl dressed the buck and hung the saddles, tied to a sapling, high in a tree, as is the custom with hunters, who thus protect and mark their big game until some native or guide can assist in getting it out of the woods.

After a breakfast of venison broiled on a stick over his fire, the young hunter set out for the mouth of the Wild Boy to get the old settler there to go with him to the lick up the Horton to bring in his game. Karl especially wanted to preserve the beautiful set of horns and have them mounted; this he afterwards did, and in later years this trophy of the East Fork still adorned the walls of the "Schuetzen-Verein" at Germania.

CHAPTER XIII

THE LURE OF THE EAST FORK

A HALF-DOZEN miles farther down the main branch of the East Fork, flanked on both sides with its laurel-wreathed and evergreen hills, below the old splash-dam and the corduroy bridges, sheltering numberless mountain brooks and trout streams, the famous little Wild Boy empties its clear, limpid waters into this chief tributary of the Sinnamahoning.

In winter this picturesque valley is snow-clad and drear in its dull mantle of white and green; but in early spring-time the wintergreen berries, flavored with the essence of the woods, glow red in a bed of dark leaves, carpeting the knolls and hollows of the forest. Later the twin-leaved and pungent leek appears,—persistent and much maligned. The banks of the streams soon grow bright yellow with golden dandelions and blossom with lovely spring violets; the woods become fragrant in the bloom of the delicate, wax-like flowers of the trailing arbutus, and the pink azalea, or wild honeysuckle, fills the mountain air with its sweet perfume. In late summer and autumn the

goldenrod and blackberry bushes cover the windfalls and barrens, while the wildwood fern, delicate and graceful, plumes the edge of the timber lands. Most lovely of all, when in blossom, is the wild rhododendron—native flower of the Alleghenies, of whose rich beauty the poet Emerson sings—yes, most gorgeous of all is the rare rhododendron, brilliantly blooming in impenetrable thickets along Potter County headwaters of the old Susquehanna.

This country had always possessed a peculiar fascination for Karl, since it was near here that he had once caught a glimpse of the boy hermit of the mountains, standing melancholy and alone near the bank of the little Wild Boy.

As he trudged along to Hull's cabin that winter morning, Karl wondered if he ever would find any one who could tell him the sad story of the "Wild Boy,"—but in this hope he was disappointed, as the whole of that life history was doubtless unknown, even to the versatile though rather taciturn character who lived at the small clearing at the mouth of the stream.

Karl was warmly welcomed at the plain log cabin home, and soon had a couple of natives, who had a team down the creek, willingly employed to get the big buck out of the Horton and take it on a bob-sled to Germania.

This done, Karl decided to spend a day or two hunting and exploring, up in the fascinating recesses of the Wild Boy region. So after a rest

and a good dinner, he said good-bye to old Sammy and his hospitable family, and turned up the branch which winds its way up in the mountains towards the "Black Hole"—lured on both by curiosity and pure love of adventure.

He walked meditatively along up the stream for perhaps three or four miles without seeing scarcely a living thing or hearing a sound, except, now and then, the splash of some little animal as it leaped from a log into the water, and swam, with bead-like eyes aglow, for the opposite bank; or the occasional "wh-i-r-r-r" of a partridge, suddenly putting up, ruffled and crested; or perhaps, once or twice, the skurrying sound of a rabbit as it darted, white tipped, through the bushes.

Soon a light snow began to fall and the early December darkness cast a sudden gloom throughout the woods. Karl had reached a high cliff, projecting from one side of the narrow valley, which overhung the stream, winding in and out at its base, making it difficult to pass farther up the ravine. He saw that by making a short detour along the side of the mountain, he would be able to reach the top of the cliff, from which position he could doubtless get a good view far up and down the valley. He could at least take his bearings from that point, and then he would set out on his return before the rapidly approaching darkness had enveloped the dismal forest.

He reached the summit of the rocky cliff with some difficulty, and stood, quite exhausted, lean-

ing on his gun, at the very edge of the precipitous chasm. Suddenly he thought he heard a low moan or cry coming from almost directly beneath him. Looking cautiously over the brink, Karl was positive he saw a movement or swaying of the bushes close down by the water's edge. He leaned slightly over the rocky ledge and, in the gathering darkness, he beheld indistinctly the grim and shaggy form of a creature which sent a chill of terror through his body and filled him with sudden and strange alarm. Instantly he thought of the uncouth boy hermit, and he was sure that he now beheld, for the second time, the unknown and terrible "Wild Boy" of the East Fork.

Weird and terrifying as the sight was to Karl, it lasted only for an instant. Turning quickly to regain a firm position, his foot slipped on the icy rock, and for a second he trembled on the very brink of the precipice. He grasped instinctively at a slippery and treacherous boulder and clung close to a crevice in the rocks to try to save himself from the terrible fall!

During that awful moment his thoughts ran swiftly over the whole history of his young life! Like quick lightning flashes, there rushed through his mind thoughts of his home—his friends—the Fatherland—the Norwegians—and Olea—his Olea! He almost called aloud her name!

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The next thing Karl was conscious of was that

his fall was being partly broken by the roots of some projecting trees and bushes which were scratching and tearing him terribly! Then he shut his eyes tightly, and that was all he remembered.

CHAPTER XIV

THE FAILURE OF THE COLONY

THE cold, hard winter of '56-'57 had finally passed, and spring had come again to cheer the saddened Northmen in Potter County.

And a very dreary winter it had been at the little village of Germania. True, the people were prosperous and contented there; but a gloom, which even the sunny days of returning summer could not dissipate, had hung heavily over the community ever since that December day when Karl Wagner had disappeared so suddenly from among them.

No tidings of him had ever been received. Not a single trace of his whereabouts could be found. All the ingenuity and resources of his people were exhausted in the vain effort to find him. Throughout the long winter parties and expeditions were organized to search the mountains and streams and all the favorite haunts where Karl had been accustomed to go, but they always returned without a single clue.

Instinctively, some of Karl's German friends connected his sudden disappearance with the poor,

guiltless Norwegians. To their minds it was not at all improbable that Karl, owing to some jealousy he might have unwittingly aroused in some of the young Norwegians on account of his love for Olea, had met with his misfortune at their hands. Some settlers along Kettle Creek and at Germania naturally imagined that Helga Olson must in some way be connected with the mysterious affair.

But all these suspicions were unfounded, and the innocent Norsemen emphatically denied any knowledge of the unfortunate affair; they generously offered to assist the Germans in any way in their power to gain any information concerning Karl, to whom many of them had become deeply attached. Though these offers were generally refused by the independent Germans, both peoples felt keenly the mutual loss of their courageous young leader and friend.

Olea, sad and broken-hearted, could not comprehend it all. It seemed too sudden, too unreal. In her grief, during the long winter months she watched and waited for Karl's return, but not even a single message from him ever came. She had not suspected Helga—he was too indolent to care. He cared for her in his apathetic and stoical way, but she knew it would never occur to him to attempt to harm his rival—he was too egotistical and indifferent for that. One day she asked him timidly if he would not take some of the young men from the settlements and try to find Karl. He noticed her agitation then, for the tremor in

her voice and the bright red color around her eyes must have betrayed her emotion and deep concern. Yet Helga, in his slow half-hearted manner, promised her he would soon go to find him—"because," he said, "I am a friend of the Germans, and—because—" he hesitated, "because—I know you love him."

Everything seemed to be going against the ill-fated Scandinavian colony. They had labored against every obstacle and disappointment in a vain effort to establish themselves in their Pennsylvania home. But the enthusiasm that had urged them on during the first year of pioneer life had long since begun to wane. Experience had taught them that, after all, it is no easy matter to undergo the privations necessary to turn a wilderness into a civilized community, and they realized how unfitted they were for the task.

Owing to alarming reports which were circulated concerning the titles to their lands, the good faith and credit of the colonists had been seriously attacked. This uncertainty of tenure, exaggerated by vindictive stories and persecutions, undoubtedly prevented the recruiting colonists, who had long been expected from Norway and Denmark, from undertaking the venture, and no more emigrants came.

Ole Bull, with all his genius and patriotism, was impulsive and visionary. But the ideals and aspirations of his youth were those of his age. He was a generous, sensitive, trustful man, his

sympathetic nature and his needs making him an easy victim for designing persons. There is no doubt but that his magnanimous efforts at Norse colonization in America were, in their disastrous results, a bitter disappointment to him. He had, of course, invested large sums of money in the very land on which his people were located; the support of the colony had been a severe drain on his resources, and because of his lack of business instinct for details, much of this money had been wasted and squandered by the dishonest agents connected with his projects.

Ole Bull was ill in San Francisco, at the end of a trying concert tour of the South, when he first learned that he had been victimized by a land swindle; that the titles to his lands in Potter County were so defective that his countrymen were in immediate danger of losing their homes. He was dumbfounded and sick at heart! When at last he was able to reach Pennsylvania, he rode on horseback, without rest, to Philadelphia to see his lawyer and agent concerning his conveyances. To his amazement it proved that a Mr. Stewardson, a wealthy Quaker of Philadelphia, was the legal owner of most of the immense tract of land Ole Bull had innocently purchased, through other parties, along Kettle Creek, and in Abbott and Stewardson townships, in Potter County.

Ole Bull was furious with anger and resentment as he confronted the swindlers and demanded the titles to his lands. In vain the disreputable agent

tried to calm and quiet him, suggesting that the artist eat something and rest before they negotiated. Though weak and faint from his long ride, he felt a sudden aversion to the food the rascal set before him and refused even to drink a cup of tea. At last, driven to desperation by the excited musician, the land grafter exclaimed, tauntingly, "I have your money; now do your worst."

Some years after this incident, it is said, the sister of this unscrupulous agent told Ole Bull that the man, on his death-bed, had confessed to her that he had poisoned the food and cup of tea he tried to persuade the artist to take, and to which he had felt so strange an aversion.

Undaunted by the endless litigation and persecution this land fraud entailed, Ole Bull immediately repurchased from Mr. Stewardson, who was interested in the efforts to plant a colony there, enough of the land to protect the people who had established permanent homes, and to secure their improvements. Some of these, as has been related, were sold to the Germans. But many of the colonists, becoming discouraged, were closing up their curved-roofed houses along Kettle Creek, and were scattering to various places.

Ole Bull's famous castle was denuded of its beautiful tapestry; the cotton fabric was taken from the walls and made into petticoats for the poor Norwegian women. The costly hangings and the paper brought from over the seas, embla-

zoned with the Norwegian arms, was stripped down and carried away. Even the musician's favorite violin, the old Guarnerius, was attached for debt; but with sublime courage he gave himself feverishly to his concert work to retrieve his shattered fortune.

Ole Bull returned to Norway in the fall of 1857 and never again visited the scenes of his colonial venture in Potter County. In the spring of that year only a dozen or more families remained at Oleona and New Bergen to perpetuate the memory of the failure at Norse colonization in Pennsylvania.

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The review of the life of Ole Bull belongs to the biographer and historian. Here, we must leave the career of the great artist with only a parting glance.

Jules Janin, the French critic, truly said of him: "His violin is his love, his art, his life!" And of his art, as of his patriotism, the musician's own words, written in 1842, come back to us with all the force of prophecy: "Art is ever dearly bought, and the true artist easily deceived, for it is only by renouncing the material good that he may obtain the divine happiness of following the guidance of his imagination and creative power. To understand himself rightly, he must renounce all else, give himself wholly to his art, and fight ignorance and stupidity. I am not the man to give up the battle, but how many wounds and blows before one reaches the goal!"

It is but just to say that Ole Bull reached the highest goal in his art, and established his reputation as the greatest violinist of his time. During many years after his failure at colonization in Pennsylvania the old musician made successful concert tours of the United States; but he loved his own land and its people most of all, and it was his wish that he might die there,—in “My country, my Norway, of which I am proud.”

It has been said that “Norway loved him because he loved Norway,” and, prophetically, the last piece the old musician ever played was his celebrated composition of forty years before, *The Mountains of Norway*.

After reaching the good old age of threescore years and ten, he returned for the last time to his home on the Island of Lysöen, off the coast of the beloved land of his birth, and there, on August 17, 1880 the old musician-patriot died.

His body was escorted by sixteen steamers to his birthplace at old Bergen, and, it is recorded, “As the fleet approached the harbor slowly, guns, fired from the fort and answered by the steamers, echoed and reëchoed among the mountains. The harbor and shipping were covered with flags of all nations, at half-mast, the whole world paying its last tribute to a genius which the whole world had learned to know and love.”

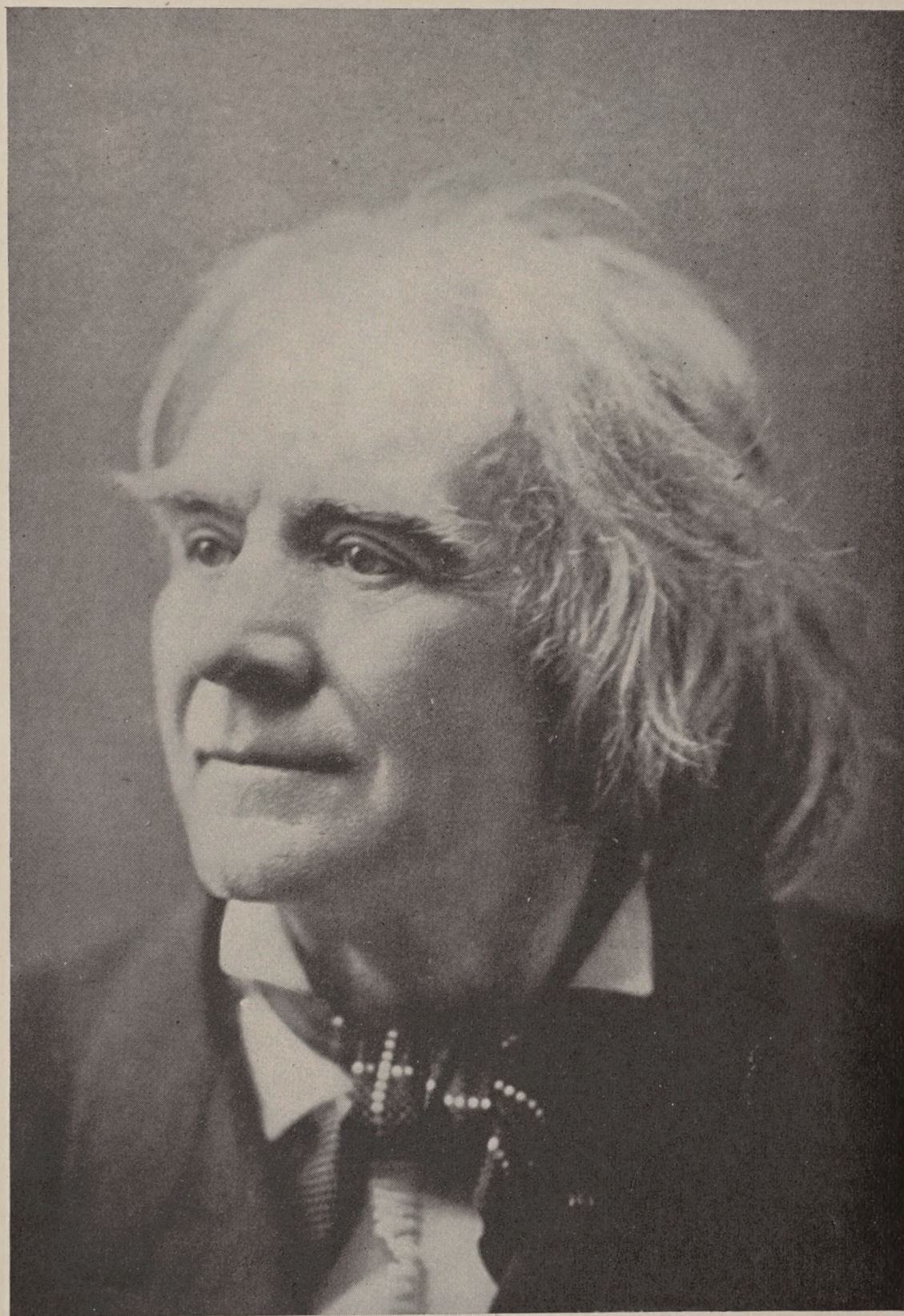
CHAPTER XV

THE RETURN

O LEA'S father had decided to join the next little company of colonists to leave America and return to Norway.

Syken Knude Ericsson was, at heart, more loyal than many of his countrymen, and had, at first, strongly advised them to remain, at whatever cost, in their new and adopted country. He was one of the more favored kinsmen whom Ole Bull, in the kindness of his heart, had protected by the repurchase of the land; and his little home, with its small patch of cultivated ground, had been deeded to him in fee. But through inexperience or bad management, Syken Knude had soon gotten into debt again, and in order to save his home he had appealed, in confidence, to some of his German acquaintances for financial aid.

* Old Rudolf Wagner, who was then one of the most prosperous citizens of Germania as well as the village doctor and Justice of the Peace, had come to Ericsson's assistance and had paid the indebtedness and taken a mortgage on the little home at New Bergen.



Ole Bull

Photogravure

Karl's father was a generous, open-hearted German, and he had willingly offered to allow Syken Knude and his family to remain on the little place near the forks of the road, and pay off the mortgage at their own convenience; out of consideration for Olea, the doctor told her, with a sad but kindly smile, that, since Karl had gone, he was glad to be able to do that much for the unfortunate people whom he had always hoped to aid, as Karl had wished.

But Syken Knude was discouraged and disheartened by the absence of his friends and the failure of all their cherished plans; he was finally persuaded to give up his home to Rudolf Wagner, satisfying the mortgage against it, and to quit forever the land which had brought so much sadness into his life, and to return with his family to old Bergen in the far-away northern peninsula.

It was the day before their departure. Olea had wandered up the little stream and was sitting, wrapped in sad reflection, on the very spot where she had first met Karl—at the curve of the path near the water's edge. How quiet and deserted everything seemed to her! Even the balmy April air had lulled itself into an approaching evening calm. On the opposite hillside a thrifty farmer was diligently plowing a small patch of cleared new ground, now and again calling out lustily, "Haw!" "Gee!" to his team. At the edge of the woods above him, near the clump of pine trees, a noisy flock of crows circled 'round,

cawing shrilly, as they do in spring-time. She watched the little brook trout as they darted in and out under the logs and brush in the stream and occasionally flopped with a splash on the top of the water, when a white-winged miller chanced to glide too near the smooth surface.

Olea was thinking of Karl, and of how he had so mysteriously left her; and she was silently bidding farewell forever to all these dear associations. At first she had not been able to realize that Karl had gone, perhaps never to return—never to claim her as his bride. Yet when no message came, with the return of spring, the realization of her loneliness and desolation dawned fully upon her. The sunshine had brought no gladness to her heart; she found no pleasure in her former joyous pastimes, and the sweetness had gone from the old familiar haunts. Every vale and hill, every curve in Little Kettle Creek, and every mossy pathway by its shady banks brought back some recollection of Karl. He was never—could never be—out of her mind.

Presently Olea was aroused from her meditations by the rumbling of a wagon coming down the turnpike. In a few minutes a team emerged into the open valley with a platform wagon containing three men. She watched them indifferently as they drove rapidly along, until they suddenly halted before the vacant house where Olea had lived. At the loud, "Who-o-a" she at once recognized the driver as Helga Olson, and,

standing up, she tried to distinguish the two men muffled up in the back seat. One of them slowly alighted from the wagon and approached the house. When he reached the battered gate near the spring he halted abruptly and stood staring at the little curved-roofed house with its demolished stone chimney and bare, closed windows.

He remained standing motionless for a full minute, while Olea watched him intently, her interest now being fully aroused. Then he turned and made a motion to his companions in the wagon. The spell was broken. Olea recognized that simple motion of the hand, and instantly the truth flashed upon her. It was Karl!

Dodging through the bushes, Olea fairly flew along the winding path and down the road—rushed past Helga and his companion in the wagon, up to the old gate by the spring, and fell breathless and exhausted into Karl's arms. He raised her gently and kissed her flushed cheek and trembling lips; then he opened the gate and seated her tenderly on the rustic seat in front of the vacant house.

Neither spoke for a moment, but Olea's well-remembered words were ringing in his ears, "Then you will always be welcome at New Bergen," and, in his embarrassment, he repeated them to her, adding shyly: "That will be our motto, Olea, which will at last unite our people; and you and I, little Sweetheart, will make them happy and contented again."

Olea scarcely answered, but, snuggling close

to him, her eyes wandered toward the deserted houses down the valley. She was crying now, and filled with sadly sweet emotions, as she told him that the Norwegian dream of colonization had ended—that, save the few remaining families, she was left almost alone amid the desolation of her girlhood's home.

Helga and the stranger from the East Fork drove quietly away and left them there, in the gathering twilight, beside the old spring. Karl took her, unresisting, in his arms and kissed her again and again, as she promised to remain there with him—always—in the valley of Little Kettle Creek—with their Germania just over the hill.

CHAPTER XVI

THE HERMIT'S HOME

KARL'S story was soon told. His accident in the mountains had been a painful and serious one. When he regained consciousness, after his terrible fall from the rocky cliff, he found himself on a bed of hemlock boughs in a dingy little cave in the side of the mountain, in front of which, and partly concealed by the rocks and bushes, a rude log hut had been constructed. It was the home of the mysterious "Wild Boy"—the hermit of the mountains.

This strange, half-demented creature had been Karl's nurse and attendant throughout the long winter months, when he lay at his mercy, lingering between life and death. And he had been kind to Karl, in his silent, uncouth way, and had nursed him back to life and strength. But those were terrible, lonely months for the injured and helpless man. They had lived on wild game, and broth, and a coarse kind of brown bread which the "Wild Boy" prepared from his frugal store; he hunted, and trapped and fished, but never, while Karl was there did he venture out to civilization.

When Karl, at last slowly growing stronger,

began to take an interest in his surroundings, he attempted to learn the secret of the life of the "Wild Boy." But the hermit became dumb and frightful whenever that subject was mentioned. He would sometimes speak kindly, though almost incoherently, with Karl, concerning his painful accident, and he showed by his every action his faithful care for his unbidden but welcome guest. And he must have understood and sympathized; but when Karl would sometimes speak of the "Wild Boy's" strange and solitary existence, he would glare fiercely at him and mumble one of his savage oaths, showing plainly that the subject was never to be mentioned.

With this strange companion Karl remained as a prisoner and patient for over three months, without any intercourse with the outside world. As soon as the snow had gone, he was able to catch brook trout in the creek that wound close to the rocks near the cabin; once or twice he ventured a short way up in the woods with the "Wild Boy" in search of ginseng, which, like the four-leaved clover, is uncommonly rare, and therefore much sought in these hills.

One day early in April, Karl made known to his kind host his desire to return to his home. A shade of sorrow crossed the grim features of the "Wild Boy" as Karl thanked him for his great kindness and explained his intention of leaving him. He did not answer, but silently led Karl to the entrance of the cabin, and stood, with a

longing, sorrowful expression—the most intelligent he had ever been seen to show—as Karl walked slowly down the valley, leaving the hermit to the solitude of his mountain home.

Karl had, no doubt, greatly over-estimated his strength, for, before he had tramped very far, he became terribly exhausted, and sank down upon a log by the stream. How long he sat there he did not remember; but, after a long rest, he aroused himself, and, peering far down the branch, he saw a lonely fisherman, skilfully whipping the stream with his flies. He tried to call aloud but his voice failed him; then he stood up and frantically motioned until, at last, the man's attention was attracted. Dropping his fishing rod, the man ran up the stream to Karl, who, to his amazement, recognized him as none other than his former New Bergen rival—Helga Olson.

The greeting was a genuine and hearty one. Helga assisted Karl over the rough, hilly ground and, by taking long rests, they were able at last to reach the log cabin of the old settler at the mouth of the Wild Boy.

During the few days' recuperation at this hospitable home, before starting for New Bergen, Karl related all his thrilling experiences of the winter; old Sammy Hull and Helga decided that Karl should direct them to the home of the hermit in the mountains, and, if possible they would induce him to give up his solitary life and take up a small farm on the East Fork.

The next morning the three men drove as far as they could up the valley and then walked slowly up the branch to the secluded retreat. When they had encircled the cliff, sheltering the dingy cave-cabin, they found the logs of the hut still smouldering in ashes; the place was deserted, and no trace of the hermit could be found. With the mysterious secret of his life the "Wild Boy" was lost to the knowledge of the East Fork country forever.

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L'ENVOI

SEBASTIAN paused as he finished his story, and together, in silence, we descended the mountain by the path leading down to the water, and across the valley to the old stone-house at Walhalla.

A full June moon illumined the gloomy ruins of the castle above us, and shed a soft radiance over Kettle Creek's mountains and streams.

As we walked back to camp in the glorious moonlight, Sebastian told me, with something of pride and emotion, of the merry May wedding, of so long ago, which was celebrated at the quaint little Norwegian church below Oleona—almost in sight of the old castle where Karl and Olea had first learned to love under the charmed influence of the melody of Ole Bull's violin.

The festal 17th of May, 1857, was long held memorable by the remnant of the Norse colony, since the happy event of that day had at last brought so closely together all the Germans and Danes and Norwegians in Stewardson and Abbott, whose worthy descendants have preserved, till this day, the traditions and history of Kettle Creek lore.

Perhaps, if ever Sebastian were questioned, he

would tell of more legends of Sinnamahoning, or tales of the old Susquehanna,—stories of pioneer history still cherished dear by Norse-Germans, long years after the fond dreams of empire have vanished away.

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